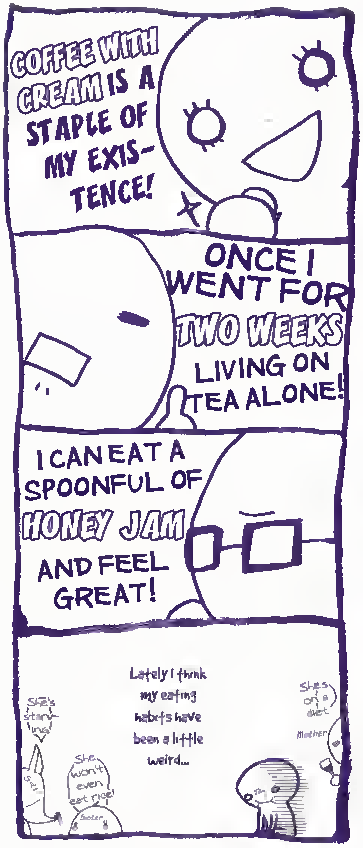
高山しのぶ
SHINOBU TAKAYAMA
2

BEHIND THE SCENES

My cat likes to go inside bags.

Which I guess is kind of useful if there were ever a disaster.


COFFEE WITH CREAM IS A STAPLE OF MY EXISTENCE!
ONCE I WENT FOR TWO WEEKS LIVING ON TEA ALONE!
I CAN EAT A SPOONFUL OF HONEY JAM AND FEEL GREAT!
Lately I think my eating habits have been a little weird...
She's starving!
She won't even eat rice!
She's on a diet.
Mother?

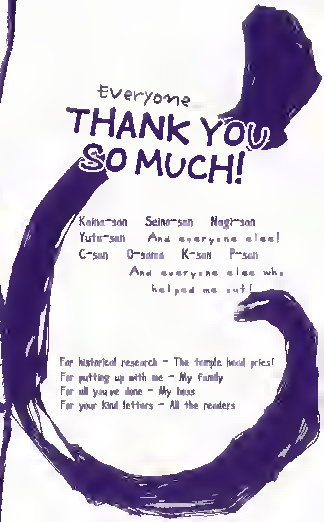
AMATSUKI ② TAKAYAMA SHINOBU

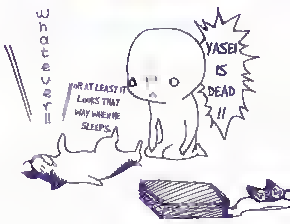
AMATSUKI ② TAKAYAMA SHINOBU

ICHIJINSHA

Oh, what did Seina do here?
And here?
And here?
WH... WHAT!? OMG, IT'S ALL WEIRD!! IT'S LIKE "THE RING!!"
BUT... BUT... IT'S POWERFUL! I BELIEVE IN YOU!!
I clench
I'll do it myself.
Sniff

I didn't have any work for my friends this time. Sorry!


Everyone
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
Kaina-san Seina-san Nagi-san
Yuta-san And everyone else!
C-san O-sama K-san P-san
And everyone else who helped me out!
For historical research – The temple head priest
For putting up with me – My family
For all you've done – My boss
For your kind letters – All the readers



See you next time!

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雑誌 50634-01

定価：本体552円＋税

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あまつき 2

高山しのぶ

一迅社

COMMENT

高山しのぶ

SHINOBU TAKAYAMA

二巻です。

はいいなぁ――！

相変わらずのあまつきですが、楽しんでいただければ幸いです。

あまつき 2

高山しのぶ

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A5判

アニメ監督 椛島勝補生	①-②	真鍋はるか
ストレンジ・プラス	①-④	美川べるの
最新型RELOAD	①-⑤	鋒倉かずや
最遅型	全5巻	鋒倉かずや

B6判

コーセルテルの魔術士物語	①-②	石動あゆま
DAWN～冷たい手	①-④	上田 信舟
誤天荒戯録	①-⑥	遠藤 浅蜘
We'll ラボラス	①-⑤	志摩 マサムス
SOUL GADGET RADIANT	①-⑫	大森 葵
London roll	①-⑥	おがせちか
エビアンワンダー～REACT	①	おがせちか
うつろ舟 shadow of myth	全4巻	細居ミライル
遠雷記	①-②	村山 慶
バンパイアドール ギルナザン	①-②	雁 丸ひか
ロスト～異界の預言者～	①	山岸 凉子
ニュースパレード	全1巻	久米田康治
LOVELESS	①-⑤	高河 ゆん
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ASS 対魔九剣伝一	全5巻	小形 国
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DEATH SCYTHE 悪神狩り	全3巻	沢宮 遊
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魔界戦紀ディスガイア	全1巻	神堂あらし
MAO MAOh	全2巻	鈴木 次郎
トライライノ	全1巻	有野 祐也
CYNTHIA_THE_MISSION	①	高屋 さい
あまつき	①-⑤	高山しのぶ
赤面可憐乱暴狐娘ノ	全5巻	福 あゆん
七匹よ毛伊よ	①	たつ ねこ
アジア旅記	全5巻	堀 淳子
旅物語	①	ぞるとぎゅり
DOLLS	①	nikeljam
ゼノサーガ EPISODE I	①	高橋 哲也
突林の水	全5巻	林 ふみの
宿神ねんバー ジルーン	全2巻	秋 sawa
Mezcal x Mancelle	①-⑤	水谷 近峰
最強マジックスター学院☆☆☆	①	南澤 久雄
LUWON	全5巻	南澤 久雄
NUS GAMER	全1巻	織島かずや
神の居場所	①-②	天木 福助
モノクローム ガーデン	全4巻	夢路 行
夢旅行全集	全2巻	夢路 行
光	①-②	瀬野 ちキ

AMATSUKI
2
SHINOBU TAKAYAMA

AMATSUKI

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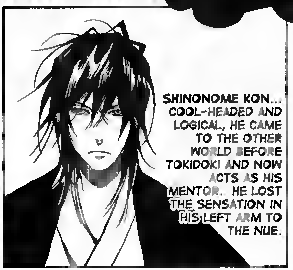
Gunshu

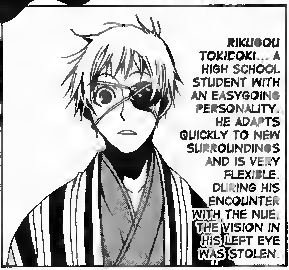
TN: "MIOTSUKUSHI": I'M PRETTY SURE THIS IS A REFERENCE TO "THE TALE OF GENJI" WHEN THERE IS A POETRY CONTEST IN WHICH POEMS HAVE TO INCLUDE THE WORD "MIOTSUKUSHI" WHICH LITERALLY MEANS "BUOY" BUT CAN BE READ AS A PUN MEANING "EVEN AT THE COST OF MY LIFE."

あまつき
高山しのぶ
Shinobu Takayama

Characters



SHINONOME KON... COOL-HEADED AND LOGICAL, HE CAME TO THE OTHER WORLD BEFORE TOKIDOKI AND NOW ACTS AS HIS MENTOR. HE LOST THE SENSATION IN HIS LEFT ARM TO THE NUE.



RIKUGOU TOKIDOKI... A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH AN EASYGOING PERSONALITY. HE ADAPTS QUICKLY TO NEW SURROUNDINGS AND IS VERY FLEXIBLE. DURING HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE NUE, THE VISION IN HIS LEFT EYE WAS STOLEN.

SASAKI TADAJIROU... A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF DEMON HUNTING. HE AND SHAMON ARE OLD FRIENDS.

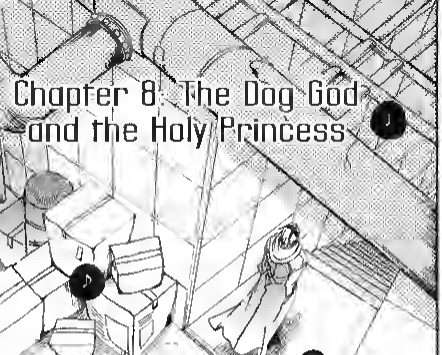
SHAMON... IN PUBLIC, HE'S A TEMPLE PRIEST, BUT IN PRIVATE, HE'S A DEMON HUNTER. HE LENDS HIS HELP TO TOKIDOKI.

KUCHIHA... A SWORDSWOMAN WHO SAVED TOKI FROM THE NUE. AS A MEMBER OF A CLAN THAT USES THE POWER OF THE DOG GOD, SHE IS DESPISED BY OTHERS. AT FIRST, SHE HATED OPTIMISTIC PEOPLE LIKE TOKIDOKI, BUT SHE'S BEGINNING TO WARM UP TO HIM.

RECAP

WHILE VISITING A HIGH-TECH VIRTUAL REALITY EXHIBIT ON THE EDO/BAKUMATSU PERIOD, TOKIDOKI WAS ATTACKED BY TWO SUPERNATURAL CREATURES CALLED THE "THE NUE" AND "THE YAKOU." HE WAS SAVED JUST IN TIME BY THE SWORDSWOMAN KUCHIHA. THE DEMONS, KUCHIHA, THE SURROUNDING HOMES AND SHOPS OF THE CITY... NONE OF IT FELT LIKE A COMPUTER GAME. IT HAD TO BE REAL. THEN TOKIDOKI CAME ACROSS SHINONOME KON, ANOTHER CLASSMATE WHO HAD BEEN AT THE MUSEUM THAT DAY. THEY HAD VISITED THE EXHIBIT ON THE SAME DAY, BUT KON NOW SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN TRAPPED THERE FOR TWO YEARS. FROM THE PRIEST SHAMON, WHO KNEW OF THEIR SITUATION, TOKIDOKI LEARNED THAT HERE, IT WAS THE BAKUMATSU, AND THE DEMONS WERE REAL - AND THAT THERE WAS NO WAY TO GO HOME. DESPITE THE DIFFICULT SITUATION, TOKIDOKI PROVED HIS ABILITY TO ADAPT AND QUICKLY BECAME ACCUSTOMED TO HIS NEW WORLD. IN ORDER TO GET BACK AT A SAMURAI WHO HAD HURT KUCHIHA, HE USED HIS KNOWLEDGE OF MODERN SCIENCE TO CREATE A FAKE MONSTER AND CAUSED A MAJOR SCENE. THIS ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF SASAKI TADAJIROU, A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, WHO CAME TO INFORM TOKIDOKI THAT THERE WAS "SOMEONE WHO WANTED TO MEET HIM." HOWEVER, IT SEEMS THAT THIS PERSON WAS ALREADY DEAD...

Chapter 8: The Dog God and the Holy Princess



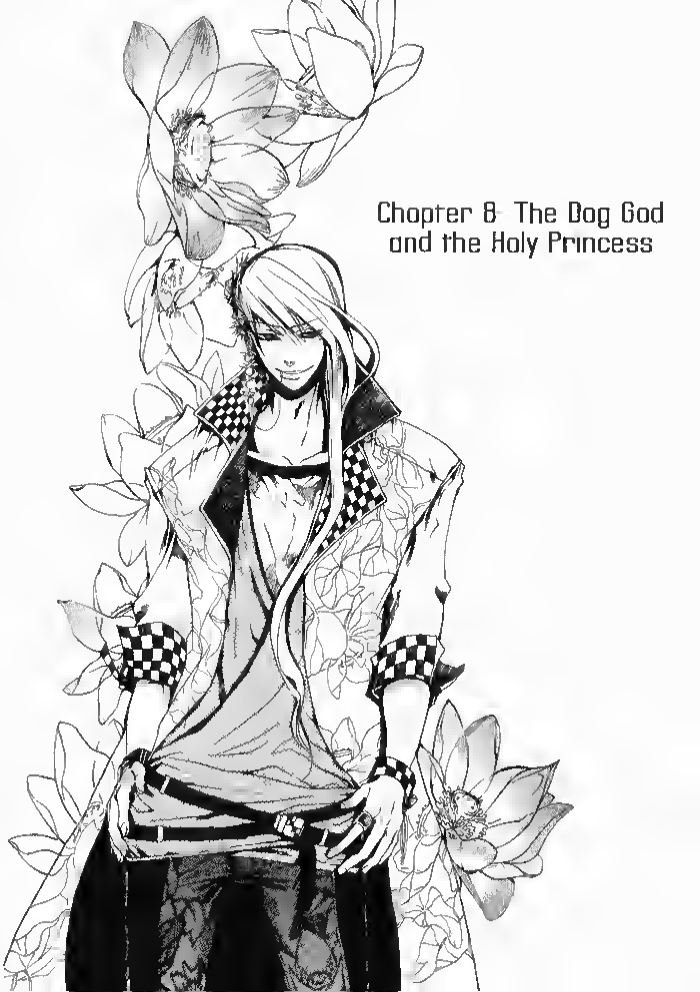
BH, HASHITA-SAN?
INDUSTRY SPY, THIEF, IT'S ALL THE SAME THING.
AND WOULDN'T YOU SAY THIS IS MORE OF A JUNK SHOP THAN A CRAP PILE?
click click click
LIVING IN YOUR OWN FILTH AS USUAL, I SEE.
WHY WOULD I WANT TO STEAL YOUR STUFF?
IT'S A PILE OF CRAP.

I'VE GOT MACS ON THAT SHELF, PCS OVER THERE AND IF YOU WANT ONE OF MY CUSTOM-BUILT MACHINES, IT'LL COST YOU MARKET VALUE
FIIIINE WHAT DO YOU WANT THIS TIME?
pout
YEAH, YEAH.
COME ON, RAT BOY, I WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME.

NOPE.
NOT THIS TIME.
FOR THIS JOB, I NEED THE KIND OF BRAINS YOU CAN'T PUT IN A BOX.

ERIC -HUM-
SO WHAT KIND OF INFO ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
I CAN FISH FOR ANYTHING YOU WANT IN THE OCEAN THAT IS THE NET.
IF YOU'VE GOT THE MONEY, THE BRAINS, AND THE BALLS, THERE'S NOTHING IN THIS WORLD THAT YOU CAN'T GET.
FROM FINDING OUT WHAT THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR ARE HAVING FOR DINNER TO SKIMMING INFO FROM THE TOP BANKS,

OOOH.
REALLY?
"PERFECT. JUST PERFECT~ ♪
THEN CAN YOU GET ME THE PHONE NUMBER OF THIS REALLY HOT CHICK?
RUSTLE
SENSAI CORPORATION
HER NAME IS "SENSAI MIDORI", FROM THE "SENSAI CORPORATION"
SHE'S A LADY PROGRAMMER WHO CAN MAKE ALL OF YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE
AND I WANNA KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT HER.



Chapter 8 The Dog God and the Holy Princess

IS DEAD ?
THE MIKO ...

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE ?
HUH? I THOUGHT SHE'S THE ONE WHO SENT FOR US
NO, NO, YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG.
HOW CAN I SAY IT... THE MIKO-SAMA DIES AND IS REBORN EVERY DAY.

SFX: SWIPE
SWish
? WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
clatter
WHAT!?
clatter
clatter

I GUESS I MISSED
DAMN IT
slam
WHO'S THERE!?
LOOK WHO'S TALKING NOW. IT'S THE DESPICABLE DEMON HERSELF.
ARE YOU A FRIEND OF THE YAKOU? DO YOU WORK FOR THE TENGU?
THIS IS AS FAR AS YOU GO!!

FIRE!!
SFX: -WHACK!
SFX: -SLASH-
WAIT!
YOU'RE GOING TO HIT THIS GIRL TOO!
I'M SHINSHU!
AH... SHINSHU-CHAN?
THAT WAS CLOSE! THIS IS TOO DANGEROUS! WHAT'S GOING ON!?
HEY, KUCHIHA, CAN YOU CUT DOWN THE BAMBOO BLINDS?
.....
SLASH
SLASH

snap
SFX: BANG BANG BANG!
TCH
SFX: SKIDS!
KYAA!
UWAA!

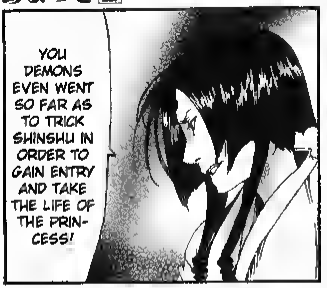
SHI-
NON-
OME...
YOU SHOULDN'T FIGHT WITH GIRLS...
tch
...HEY
...
GUESS THAT BOW DOESN'T WORK SO WELL NOW, HUH?
DON'T RIDI-
CULE ME
!!
!?
snap
snap

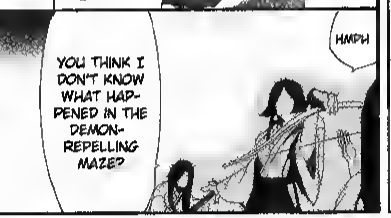
SFX: SHRIEK
SFX: WHOOSH
WHA... WHAT THE...!?
HUH!?
SFX: WHOOSH
THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR ATTACKING ME!!
HAHA-HAHA!!! HOW DO YOU LIKE BEING TRAPPED BY YOUR OWN SHADOW!?

THE SAME GOES FOR THE TWO OF YOU!!
SPIN--OOOFF--
!?
UWAAH!!
WAH!

WHAT DID YOU TELL THEM ABOUT THIS SHRINE!!?
BE QUIET!! DON'T LIE TO ME!!
B-BUT THEY'RE
BLE
TREM
UWAAH!!!

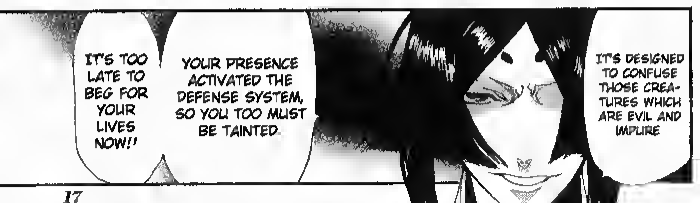
SHINSHU!! WAS IT YOU!? DID YOU INVITE THOSE BASTARDS HERE!!?
NOW WHO CAUSED ALL OF THIS TROUBLE!?





THIS PLACE IS THE HEADQUARTERS FOR THOUSANDS OF SHRINES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY! THIS IS THE CENTER OF DEMON EXTERMINATION!!
BECAUSE
THE ONE WHO RESIDES HERE IS A GODDESS! THIS IS THE MOST HOLY OF PLACES, THE SAKAGAMI SHRINE!!"

SFX: ~IMPACT!~


IT'S DESIGNED TO CONFUSE THOSE CREATURES WHICH ARE EVIL AND IMPURE
YOUR PRESENCE ACTIVATED THE DEFENSE SYSTEM, SO YOU TOO MUST BE TAINTED.
IT'S TOO LATE TO BEG FOR YOUR LIVES NOW!!

* TN: THIS IS A REFERENCE TO THE CHARACTER SAKAGAMI FROM THE FAMOUS MANGA PLAY "SEKIMARU." SHE IS AN INSANE PRINCESS WITH DISHEVELED HAIR, AND IS SYMBOL OF THE DUALITY OF OPPOSITES. "THE NATURAL ORDER OR UPSIDE DOWN? HOW AMAZING THAT BOTH SHOULD BE WITHIN ME!"

THAT'S NOT TRUE ...!!
A DEMON-REPELLING SYSTEM, HUH...?
HAHA
IT MUST HAVE BEEN ME WHO SET IT OFF, THEN.
PLEASE
KU-CHI-HA!
STOP IT!!
PLEASE
THOSE TWO ARE JUST NORMAL HUMANS SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST LET THEM GO...?
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO SAY THINGS LIKE THAT... YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE TO MAKE THAT FACE...

RIGHT? BECAUSE YOU'RE STRONG, KUCHIHA. SO EVERY-THING WILL BE OKAY.
YOU'RE JUST A NORMAL GIRL. OKAY, AND A REALLY CUTE ONE AT THAT!
...TOKI
NO MORE OF THIS SENSELESS TALK!
THRUST
I WILL DETERMINE WHAT YOU TRULY ARE!!
IF YOU HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY A TENGU OR A YAKOU, SHOW YOURSELVES NOW!!

HWAAH!
!?
...
!!?
~SK~IMPACT~
HE HE HE HE HE
I'M JUST RIPPING YOUR SHADOWS TO PIECES.
NOW, SHALL WE SEE THE SOURCE OF YOUR DEMON POWERS?

HUH?
AAH
...AH
BUT

YOU HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY A TENGU.
TENGU...?

HEH
AS I THOUGHT

WHAT DID THAT GUY DO TO MY EYE ...!?
GAHH
KUCHI-HA!?
SWISH
grrrr
SFX: REVELATION:
SO THIS IS A DOG DEMON? IMPRESSIVE—
IS THIS THE WORK OF THE YAKOU?
FOR A STRANGER LIKE YOU TO LOOK DOWN UPON ME IS A GRAVE INSULT...
grrrr

...WHAT!? BASTARD ...!!
grrrr
HEH, IT'S NOT AS THOUGH A THIRD-RATE MIKO LIKE YOU HAS MUCH POWER ANYWAY...
YOU WANT TO FIGHT? NOW THAT YOU'VE RELEASED MY TRUE FORM, I COULD KILL YOU IN AN INSTANT.
grrrr
QUIT BABBLING ON!!
I'LL SKIN YOU AND LET THE PRINCESS USE IT AS A RUG !!

SFX: -STAB-

...WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING THAT WOMAN...?
!?

BUT EVEN I...
I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY INTEREST IN STOPPING YOU

GET OUT OF HERE, THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME.
THEN SHALL I TEAR YOU APART AS WELL...?
GROWL
SAVING YOUR LIFE
WHAT
WHAT ARE YOU DOING...?
whisper
YOU'RE PATHETIC! WILL NO ONE HELP ME!?
OH, I CAN HEAR YOU ALL LAUGHING AT ME!
OH MY...
DO FORGIVE ME
BUT YOUR LITTLE PERFORMANCE WAS JUST SOOO INTERESTING.

SFX: -SKNEIL-

UGH...
SO THEY WERE TELLING THE TRUTH WHEN THEY SAID YOU CALLED THEM, PRINCESS
AND ARE THOSE TWO NOT HIS FRIENDS?

PRIN-CESS...!!! YOU SHOULD NOT COME TO A PLACE SUCH AS THIS...!!!
IT'S ALRIGHT, TSURUUME.
IT WAS I WHO TOLD SASAKI TO HAVE THAT BOY COME HERE.

HE HAS THE "UN-WRITTEN PAGE."
AND HE IS MY GUEST.

THAT IS CO-RECT.
THESE PEOPLE ARE... NO, THAT'S IMPOS-SIBLE
THEN... THESE PEOPLE...

HUH ...!?
PERHAPS WE SHOULD SEE IF ANY-THING CAN BE DONE FOR HIS LEFT EYE?
THAT TENGU
HAS PLAYED A TRICK ON HIM.
TSURUUME, WILL YOU SWEEP AWAY THE TENGU'S UNCLEANLI-NESS?
YES, MY LADY!
DON'T WORRY. A SMALL THING LIKE THAT CAN BE EASILY FIXED.
YOU'RE
NO WAY
!
.....

I AM THE LONGTIME FOE OF THE TENGU, AND THE NATURAL ENEMY OF DEMONS
I AM THE PROTECTOR OF ALL HUMANITY.
I AM GINSHU.
WELCOME, MY GUESTS.
I AM THE MASTER OF THIS HOUSE. SHAMON AND SASAKI ARE MY SUBORDINATES.
TOKI-DONO?
crunk
crunk
WILL YOU COME,

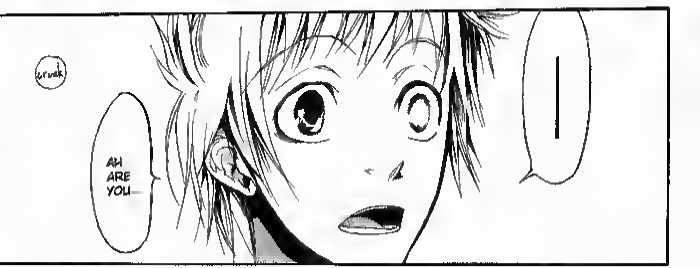
AMATSUKI
TAKAYAMA SHINOBU
ISBN 4-7580 5187 9

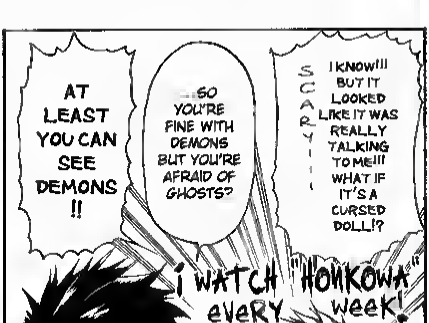
SOON YOU WILL CHOOSE BETWEEN TWO PATHS.
WILL YOU DESTROY THE PRINCESS AND THE AMATSUKI AND RETURN TO NIRVANA,
OR PROTECT THE AMATSUKI AND BECOME ITS MASTER...?
WELL, WHICH WILL IT BE?

Chapter 9. Coming Into Bloom

Chapter 9: Coming Into Blood
amamiyuki

I AM THE LONGTIME FOE OF THE TENGU, AND THE NATURAL ENEMY OF DEMONS.
I AM THE PROTECTOR OF ALL HUMANITY.
I AM GINSHU.
WELCOME, MY GUESTS.
I AM THE MASTER OF THIS HOUSE. SHAMON AND SASAKI ARE MY SUBORDI NATES.
WILL YOU COME, TOKI-DONO?
Gruuk
Gruuk
Gruuk
Gruuk


Gruuk
AH ARE YOU...
I

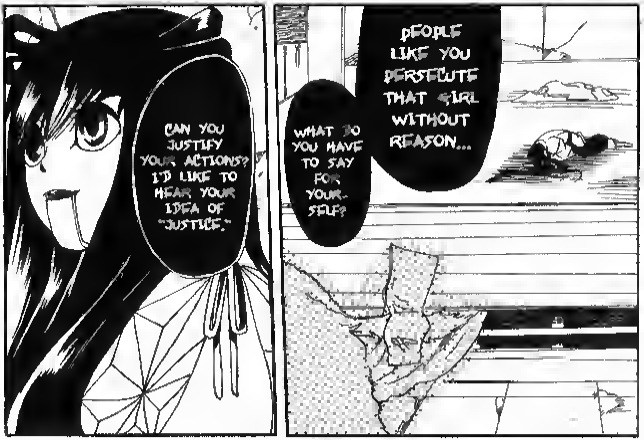

AT LEAST YOU CAN SEE DEMONS !!
...SO YOU'RE FINE WITH DEMONS BUT YOU'RE AFRAID OF GHOSTS?
SCARY!!!
I KNOW!!! BUT IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS REALLY TALKING TO ME!!! WHAT IF IT'S A CURSED DOLL!?
I WATCH HONKOWA EVERY week!
HONKOWA?
SIGH
SIGH

T/N: "HONKOWA" "TRUE TERROR" – A PARANORMAL/PSYCHIC INVESTIGATION REALITY SHOW IN JAPAN LIKE "MOST HAUNTED" IN ENGLISH.

A VERY STRONG DEMON IN ITS LAST MOMENTS OF LIFE LAID A CURSE UPON ME.
HOW-EVER...
MY DUTY IS TO FIGHT THE EVIL DEMONS THAT THREATEN HUMANKIND...
I AM ABLE TO TRANSFER MY SOUL TO THIS DOLL, BUT IT IS NOT ALIVE.
THE CURSE RENDERS MY BODY LIFELESS
THE CURSE...
HISS
SHINSHU!!! PRINCESS!! GET DOWN!!!
SHOCK
NO!

GRR-GRRR
SFX: SHOOM

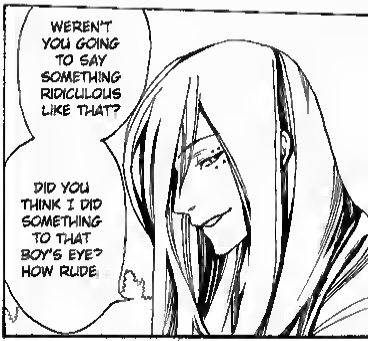
YOU ARE ONE WHO KILLS DEMONS FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH GOALS.
THIS IS NO ORDINARY CURSE... THIS IS MOST EVIL.
STOP!


CAN YOU JUSTIFY YOUR ACTIONS? I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR IDEA OF "JUSTICE."
WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?
PEOPLE LIKE YOU PERSECUTE THAT GIRL WITHOUT REASON...

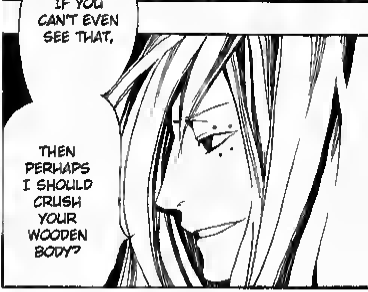
HE HE
WHAT'S WRONG? CAT GOT YOUR TONGUE?
TOO BAD
YOU'RE POWERLESS IN THAT FORM, AREN'T YOU?
YOU ALONE STAND AGAINST THE SPIRIT WORLD,
BUT YOU CAN'T EVEN TELL US WHY.
ARE WE SO DISGUSTING, PRINCESS?
ARE WE SO REPREHENSIBLE THAT WE DO NOT DESERVE TO LIVE?
HUH?
AH...
WHO IS THAT...?
?

HOW!!?
HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE!?
YOU TENGU!!
...!!
WHEN I'M DONE, I'LL LEAVE
I'M JUST HERE TO TALK, SO DON'T WORRY YOURSELVES.
OH, I'M JUST BORROWING THAT GIRL'S BODY FOR A MOMENT.
I SUPPOSE YOU WANT TO KILL THE INVADER.
AFTER ALL, YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THE PRINCESS'S PROTECTOR.
WELL THEN, SHALL WE KILL EACH OTHER?
TSURUME
HAHAHA, YOU'RE AS HOT-TEMPERED AS EVER
DON'T PLAY WITH US!!!
whisper
whisper
GIVE HER BODY BACK NOW!!!

NO !!!


WEREN'T YOU GOING TO SAY SOMETHING RIDICULOUS LIKE THAT?
DID YOU THINK I DID SOMETHING TO THAT BOY'S EYE? HOW RUDE.

HE DOES NOT WISH TO KILL.
HE'S NOT LIKE YOU.


IF YOU CAN'T EVEN SEE THAT,
THEN PERHAPS I SHOULD CRUSH YOUR WOODEN BODY?

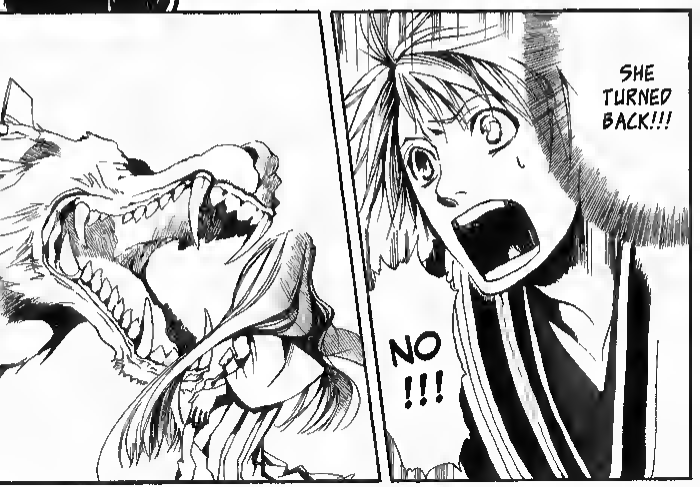
SHIN-
SHU-
CHAN
!!!
N
NO
!!
I DO NOT WISH TO KILL A CHILD AGAINST WHOM I HAVE NO GRUDGE.
MOVE.
I WILL NOT!!!
I SAID MOVE
!!
ORG
WL

...!
YOU TOO?
SO QUIT IT, YOU BIG BULLY ...!!
...YOU SHOULDN'T PICK ON PEOPLE WEAKER THAN YOURSELF... THAT'S WHAT I THINK, AT LEAST...
LUNGE
...TCH.

GLAN
CE
GLARE
AH, THIS IS GETTING BORING.
I THINK I'LL LEAVE THE REST TO YOU, PRINCESS.
SILEN
CE
SO IT'S LIKE THIS, THEN?
... OH, DEAR.

WHAT A USELESS MONGREL YOU WERE
WELL, I SUPPOSE .
IT'S BECAUSE YOU KNOW YOU'RE THE LAST OF YOUR KIND
sigh
SHOCK
SFX: GROWL
YOU BAS-TARD !!!

AH?
WHAT?
7H
!
HMPH.
SFX — :KYAAA!:-


SHE TURNED BACK!!!
NO !!!

STOP HIM!!!
STOP HIM!!
STOP HIM!!!
I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT!
QUICK-LY!!
HUH!?
ME!?
TOKI-DONO!!!
DO SOME THING !!!
STAY BACK, EVERY-ONE!!
SFX: -HEARTBEAT-
SFX: -METALLIC CLANG-

SFX: -CRUNCH-

!!
...IT'S TOO BRIT-TLE!!

touch
WHAT!?

DON'T USE THAT EYE.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO? THINK OF SOMETHING HARD.
IT CAN BE ANY-THING.
Fe Iron
Ag Gold
Ni Nickel
Cu Copper
Au Silver
THINK.
YOU KNOW THIS.
NOW STOP IT.

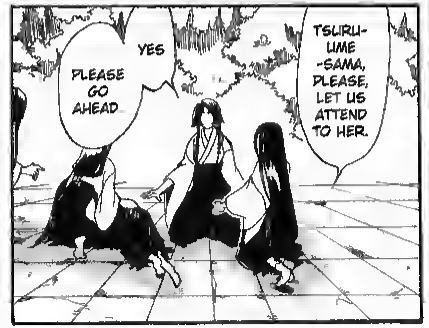
SFX: -IMPACT-

EH!?
?
?
?!
EH!?
HUH!?
WHAT WAS THAT!?
WHAT DID I DO!?
...Oh my...
Thank goodness...
SIGH
AS I THOUGHT...
DID YOU SEE THAT, SHINSHU?
THAT...
IS THE POWER OF THE "UNWRITTEN PAGE."

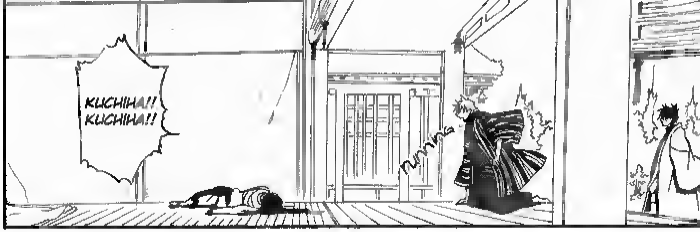
SFX: -MOVEMENT-
RETURN TO YOUR SEALED FORM!!!
DAMNED DOG !!
SFX: -CRASH-
SFX: -WHOOSH-

SFX: -SCOFFER HISS-

huff
huff
HOW... HOW CAN SHE KEEP THAT THING INSIDE HER BODY...?


YES
PLEASE GO AHEAD
TSURU-UME -SAMA, PLEASE, LET US ATTEND TO HER.

SFX: -HISS-


KUCHIHA!!
KUCHIHA!!
running

MOVE AWAY FROM HER.

ARE YOU OKAY!?
KUCHI-HA...
NN.
QUICK, SOME-BODY BRING HER A FUTON

FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY, DO AS I SAY
THERE'S NO KNOWING IF THAT DEMON WILL COME OUT AGAIN
WHY DON'T YOU LET ME HANDLE HER FROM HERE, LITTLE BOY?
SHE'S DAN-GER-OUS.

WHAT DID YOU DO TO HER BEFORE!?
YOU DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT KUCHIHA!
NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE HAP-PENED IF NOT FOR YOU
HE'S RIGHT. AFTER ALL...
IF YOU'VE GOT TIME TO PICK FIGHTS, THEN YOU'VE GOT TIME TO APOLOGISE

...
SO WHY DON'T YOU START BY THANKING THE GUY WHO SAVED YOUR LIFE?

PLEASE THAT IS CORRECT, TSURUUME!!
DEAL WITH THIS RESPONSIBLY
I APOLOGISE FOR ANY DISTURBANCE WE HAVE CAUSED YOU.
OUR SAVIORS
PLEASE ALLOW US TO SHOW YOU THE UTMOST HOSPITALITY
ALLOW ME TO AGAIN WELCOME YOU AS GUESTS... NO

OKAY
THEN HOW ABOUT SOME TEA, AND SOMETHING TO EAT?
sm
UNDERSTOOD...!!!
OH, AND BY THE WAY, I'M A CONNOISSEUR SO BRING THE GOOO STUFF
GRRRR
Huh?

SO THERE IS SOMETHING THAT YOU VALUE.
I SEE...
BUT THAT FOUL DEMON...
WILL CONTINUE TO HOUND HER...
UNTIL IT HAS KILLED YOU ALL.
I REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE.
IN ORDER TO FIGHT THE DEMONS WHO COMMIT EVIL ACTS...

WHAT... WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH ME?

...I CANNOT DO IT WITH MY STRENGTH ALONE...
VERY WELL... I SHALL TELL YOU A TRAGIC TALE

.....
.....
SO LET US GO INTO THE SHRINE ...
IT IS A LONG STORY...

SFX: -KICK-
GAH !!
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU AIN'T BUYING IT.

TA: IN JAPAN IT'S SAID THAT IF YOU SNEEZE ONCE, SOMEONE IS SAYING SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT YOU, BUT IF YOU SNEEZE TWICE, THEY'RE SAYING SOMETHING BAD

DON'T WORRY!! YOU'RE THEIR SAVIOR ~!!
LET'S GO!!
HEH
HMMM.
I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT AT LEAST ONE WOULD HAVE DIED. HE'S QUITE SOMETHING, ISN'T HE?
ARE YOU STUPID? YOU DON'T NEED TO MAKE ANY MORE ENEMIES
DID YOU THINK THE DOG GOD WOULD JOIN US?
THE ANTIPATHY BETWEEN US IS DEEP! YOU FOOL!!

OH, SHUT UP, YOU TWO!!
HOW ABOUT WE STAY OUT OF EACH OTHER'S BUSINESS?
YEAH, YEAH
THANKS FOR LETTING THE ENEMY KNOW WHAT WE'RE UP TO!
HOWEVER, THE TIME OF HIS AWAKENING IS AT HAND.
MASTER, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO?
RIGHT NOW, WE CAN JUST KEEP AN EYE ON THEM.
WE DON'T HAVE TO MAKE A MOVE YET.
YES SIR, I WILL DO MY BEST!!
mod
I AM NOW EVEN MORE EAGER TO MAKE HIM ONE OF US
hmph
BUT...
NO...
IT CAN'T BE...

AMATSUKI
TAKAYAMA SHINOBU
ISBN 4-7580 5187 9

Chapter 10
Faded Flowers
GEN-SAN...
I TOLD YOU, IT'S NO GOOD!
BUT ISN'T THIS A SACRED TREE?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
STUUUPID.
DON'T THE GODS WANT US TO EAT?
WE'RE TAKING CARE OF OUR OWN PROBLEMS
SHOULDN'T THE GODS BE HAPPY?
ISN'T IT THEIR JOB TO MAKE SURE WE'RE

OH...
YEAH, I GUESS SO
THEN COME ON!
NOW THAT YOU UN-DERSTAND, GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS!!

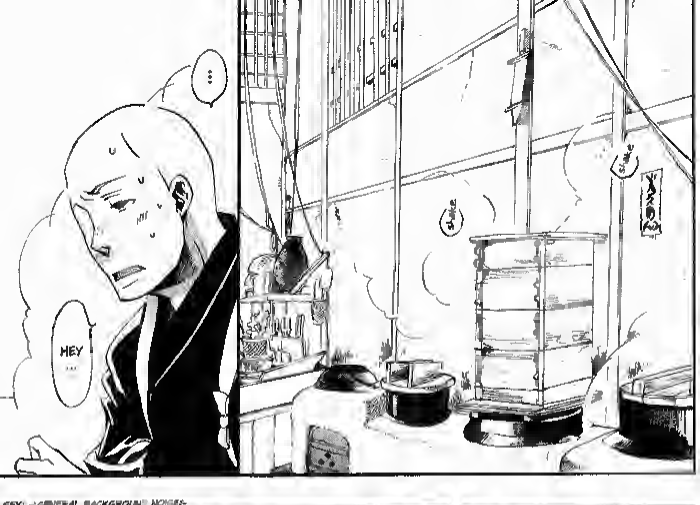
Chapter 10
Faded Flowers

THIS TITLE HAS THE SAME CHARACTERS AS KUCHIHA'S NAME (散華) AND IS READ THE SAME WAY, BUT IT'S WRITTEN OUT AS A PHRASE (散り花) INSTEAD OF A NAME

TN: SHIGIKU IS TECHNICALLY ASEXUAL, BUT I'VE CHOSEN TO REFER TO HER AS FEMALE BECAUSE USING MALE PRONOUNS FOR A PRINCESS IS A LITTLE SILLY? IN JAPANESE, YOU CAN AVOID SPECIFYING A PERSON'S GENDER, BUT IN ENGLISH THAT'S A LITTLE DIFFICULT. ^^;;

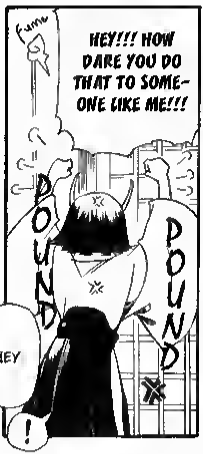
AND WITHIN THEIR HEART, EVERY-ONE HAS A DES-TINY.
BUT WE CANNOT READ THE WORDS IT IS WRIT-TEN IN.
SPIN -ROLLING TO A STOP-
ALRIGHT
ONE IS THE BODY.
YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD
ONE IS THE HEART.
THEN WHO WROTE THEM?
THE GODS, OF COURSE.
THE GODS MADE THIS WORLD, AND THEY MADE US.
AND EVEN NOW, THE WORLD IS CAUGHT UP IN THE THREADS THEY WEAVE.
IT'S CALLED "HEAVEN'S NET". AND IT'S SAID THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO CAN SEE ITS THREADS
REALLY?
THEN DID THE GODS WRITE ABOUT ME TOO?

YES.
THAT'S RIGHT.
EVERY-ONE'S STORY IS WRIT-TEN.
EVEN THE END OF OUR LIVES IS WOVEN INTO HEAVEN'S NET...
I'M SURE YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU, RIGHT?
YES!
I SEE, KUCHI-HA.
KUCHI-HA.
YOU'RE A SWEET LITTLE GIRL,
SO I'LL TELL YOU.
SFX: -ROLLING TO A STOP-



T/N: SANMA FROM MEGURO IS SUPPOSED TO BE REALLY GOOD

HEY, THE DEMON KING IS HERE...
Shouldn't someone come defeat him?
NOOOO OOOO!!
KYAAA!
Eep
Ah!
Ah!
WHAT DO YOU THINK
WICKED MEN
YOU'RE
DOING?
DOOM
KUH?
SHO
SHOCK


Funnn
HEY!!! HOW DARE YOU DO THAT TO SOME-ONE LIKE ME!!!
POUND
POUND
HEY
!

GO!
GET OUT OF HERE!!
Ah!
Ah!
SFX: ~SHOVE~

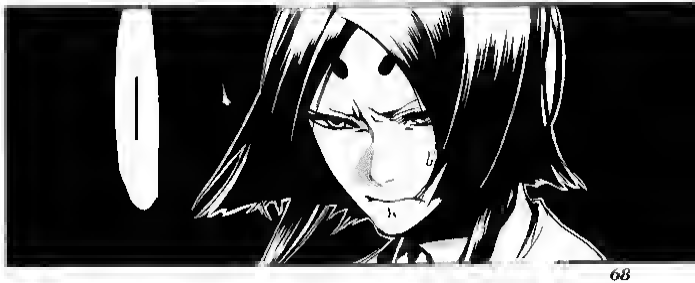
THEY CAME HERE TO STUDY AT THE REQUEST OF THE PRINCESS
THOSE GUYS WERE BUDDHIST MONKS, RIGHT? WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN A SHINTO SHRINE?
IMPERIAL COURT
SHOGUNATE
ONMYOU BUREAU
SAKAGAMI SHRINE
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL HEADQUARTERS
pui
WE'RE ON THE SAME LEVEL AS SASAKI, THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE SHOGUNATE'S ONMYOU BUREAU
THIS PLACE IS OUTWARDLY A SHRINE,
BUT REALLY IT'S ALSO THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS OF ALL THE BUDDHIST TEMPLES AS WELL WE DON'T MAKE A DISTINCTION

T/N. ONMYOUDOU IS A TYPE OF JAPANESE MAGIC WITH STRONG TAOIST INFLUENCES

OH YEAH, AND WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT YOUR PRINCESS
BASTARD
BEING CURSED?
GLARE

YEAH, WHAT-EVER.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF SUCH A GLORIOUS PERSON AS OUR PRINCESS?
HO
Bow down, fool!!!
hehe

IF EVEN THE BUDDHA CAN'T LIFT THE CURSE, THEN PERHAPS IT IS THE WORK OF THE GODS?
THE GODS ARE VENGE-FUL,
BUT THE BUDDHA SAVES



brush

FLOWERS AND FRUITS DON'T KEEP - THEY ROT AWAY. "FADED FLOWERS." THAT'S WHAT MY NAME MEANS
HE NAMED ME "KUCHIHA"
WITH THE HOPE THIS BLOODLINE WOULD END WITH ME
MY GRAND-FATHER NAMED ME
SO I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT
MY GRAND-FATHER DIED WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD, AND I DON'T HAVE ANY SIBLINGS
I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT MY MOTHER AND FATHER LOOKED LIKE

IT WASN'T MY FAULT.
I STILL FELT LIKE I WAS THE VICTIM.
BUT BACK THEN...
I USED TO BELIEVE THAT.
MONSTERS WERE JUST A BUNCH OF SILLY SUPERSTITIONS AND NONSENSE
MY BLOOD WASN'T CURSED.

I REALLY AM A MONSTER.
BUT...
I
BUT THAT WAS ...!!
BUT ..
IF YOU HATE ME
SO IT'S ONLY NATURAL
IT KILLS PEOPLE
THIS BLOOD

TOKI ...?
Fall
I'M SO SORRY
I CAN'T DO ANYTHING
THAT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER ...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY ...

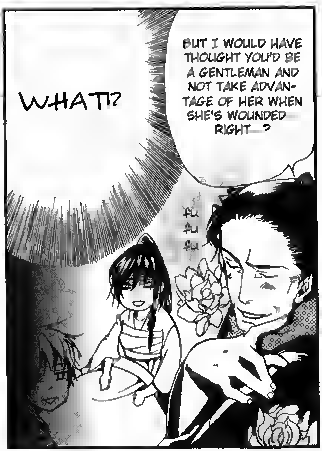
MY WORDS SOUND CHEAP, EVEN TO ME
WHAT GOOD ARE WORDS FROM THE HEART...
WHY AM I SO PATHETIC?
I CAN'T FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO SAY?
IF EVEN AT A TIME LIKE THIS?
WHY DO YOU LOOK SO MISERABLE?
IDIOT.

Heh.
YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE, DON'T YOU?
EVEN THOUGH YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO,
YOU MANAGED TO STOP THAT DOG ANYWAY.
YOU'RE NOT THAT TREMBLING WIMP ANY-MORE.

* RIGHT? BECAUSE YOU'RE STRONG, KUCHIKI, SO EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY
** YOU'RE JUST A NORMAL GIRL, OKAY, AND A REALLY CUTE ONE AT THAT!

AHEM !!
COUGH
SURPRISE

AH !!!
OH NO ~~
PLEASE FORGIVE ME! I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTERRUPT ANYTHING~!
SA-SA-KI!!
when did you show up?


WHAT!?
BUT I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D BE A GENTLEMAN AND NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER WHEN SHE'S WOUNDED RIGHT...?

THE PRINCESS IS CALLING FOR HIM.
BUT I JUST CAME
TO BORROW TOKIDOKI-KUN FOR A LITTLE WHILE

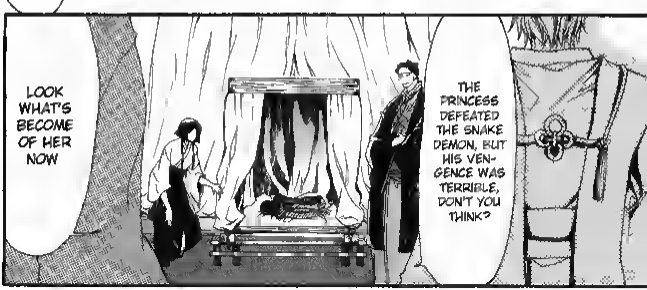
PLEASE CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES HERE
PLEASE COME THIS WAY

ISN'T HEY THIS KINDA WEIRD?
WHY DO WE HAVE TO WEAR THESE? THIS IS TOTALLY POINTLESS.
QUIT YOUR COMPLAINING!!
YOU'RE FILTHY, BUT WE HAVE TO AT LEAST TRY TO MAKE YOU LOOK PRESENTABLE
THIS IS A HOLY PLACE
These clothes belong to the Princess so don't get them dirty ☆
PRESENTABLE?
OH PLEASE
DO YOU THINK I HAVE ANY INTENTION OF BEING PRESENTABLE?
HMPH
THEN AT LEAST TRY TO FAKE IT
YOU'RE GOING TO SEE THE PRINCESS AFTER ALL,

!
COME ON, SHE'S WAITING.
SLEEPING BEAUTY IS ABOUT TO WAKE UP.
Hail to our princess!
Hail!
SWISH

Hail!
clunk

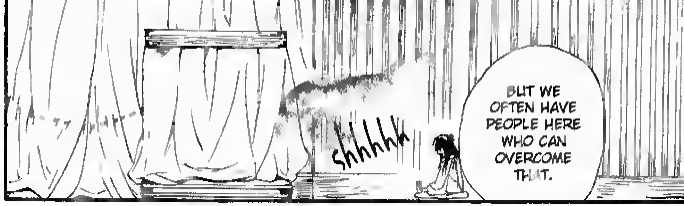
SHOCK
!?
UWAAH!
THIS ISN'T THE REAL PRINCESS

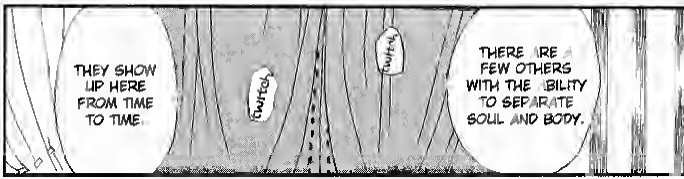

THE PRINCESS DEFEATED THE SNAKE DEMON, BUT HIS VENGENCE WAS TERRIBLE, DON'T YOU THINK?
LOOK WHAT'S BECOME OF HER NOW

I'VE LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY TIMES SHE'S REGENERATED.
SHE IS CURSED TO WITHER AND DIE EACH DAY.
BUT IT'S NOT A TRUE DEATH - SHE IS MERELY SEPARATED FROM HER BODY.
SEPARATED...
FROM HER BODY?
THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERYTHING IN THIS WORLD.
ONE IS THE "BODY."
I GUESS YOU COULD CALL IT THE PHYSICAL BODY OR THE FLESH. THAT'S WHAT YOU CAN SEE FROM THE OUTSIDE.
AND THE OTHER SIDE IS THE "HEART."
IT'S WHAT YOU SEE WHEN YOU REALLY GET TO KNOW SOMEONE YOU COULD ALSO CALL IT THE "SOUL."
IT CONTAINS ALL OF THEIR MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES.
body
heart

BODY... AND SOUL...?
UM, THAT'S KIND OF HARD TO BELIEVE, ISN'T IT?
THEN WHY DON'T YOU SEE FOR YOURSELF?
!
SFX: ~WHOOSH~
THIS DOLL AND THAT WITHERED HUSK ARE MY "BODY."
!
AH!

THE PRINCESS'S SPIRIT..
HER HEART IS WHAT WE CALL THE "SOUL."
SFX: HRRRRRR
WITH A SHINTO PRAYER, SHE CAN FREE HER SOUL...
YOU SEE, "BODY" AND "SOUL" CANNOT BE SEPARATED
WITHOUT A BODY, THE SOUL CANNOT LIVE.


BUT WE OFTEN HAVE PEOPLE HERE WHO CAN OVERCOME THAT.
Shhhhk

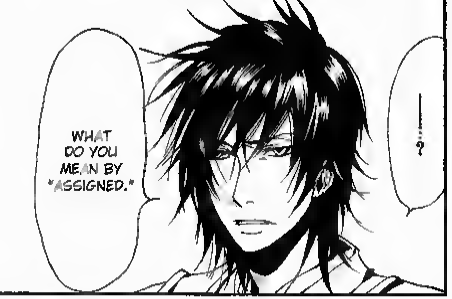

THEY SHOW UP HERE FROM TIME TO TIME.
twitch
twitch
THERE ARE A FEW OTHERS WITH THE ABILITY TO SEPARATE SOUL AND BODY.

WE'VE EVEN GIVEN THEM NICKNAMES SO THEY'RE EASY TO REMEMBER!
BUT IT'S REALLY AN AMAZING ABILITY! AS FAR AS WE KNOW, ONLY FOUR PEOPLE CAN DO IT!
"Hey! Oi! Ouy don't interrupt a serious scene for that.
TURN
HEY!! THIS IS AN IMPORTANT POINT, SO PAY ATTENTION!

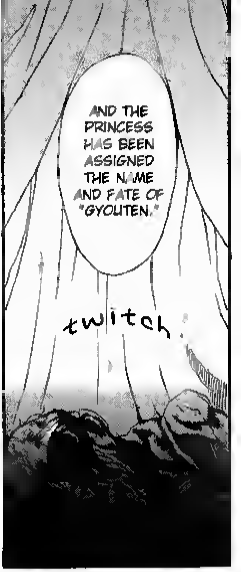
ONE IS "KOKUTEN"
AT THE MOMENT, WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT HE OR SHE LOOKS LIKE

ONE IS "BONTEN"
I BELIEVE YOU'VE ALREADY MET?

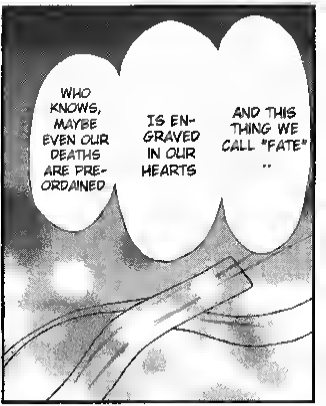
ONE IS "TEITEN."
THAT IS THE NAME OF THE GOD THAT CREATED THIS WORLD.


WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "ASSIGNED."
.....?

ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE ASSIGNED A DESTINY BY TEITEN.


AND THE PRINCESS HAS BEEN ASSIGNED THE NAME AND FATE OF "GYOLITEN."
twitch.

THIS IS TRUE FOR ALL PEOPLE
SO WHAT PEOPLE DO TO THE WORLD AROUND THEM...


WHO KNOWS, MAYBE EVEN OUR DEATHS ARE PRE-ORDAINED
IS EN-GRAVED IN OUR HEARTS
AND THIS THING WE CALL "FATE" ..

DOESN'T IT SEEM AS THOUGH WE'RE ALL IN THE PALM OF TEITEN'S HAND?
IT IS SAID THAT THIS WORLD IS OUR FUTURE
BECOMES THEIR DESTINY
slide
IT'S RATHER BORING, ISN'T IT?
IF YOU THINK IT THAT WAY
BUT

HELP US...
wriggle
HELP US...
OHH? WHAT ARE YOU BLABBERING ABOUT? AS IF...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
JUST A VISITOR.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
THE HUMANS ARE CUTTING AWAY AT US, LITTLE BY LITTLE.
HELP US...
DON'T YOU HAVE ANY COMPASSION? CAN YOU STAND BY AND WATCH US DIE?

IF THE SPIRIT IS THAT WEAK AND HAS SEPARATED FROM THE BODY, THEN IT IS NO MORE.
...IT'S GONE
WASN'T IT A TREE SPIRIT?
HMM?
WHO IS THAT?
HEY, WAIT!
JUST TELL ME A LITTLE MORE...!!
JUMP
!!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
CAN YOU NOT WAIT FOR BONTEN'S ADVICE!?
YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T FLY ON YOUR OWN!!
CAN'T YOU WAIT?!!
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

IF WE DON'T DO SOME-THING,
WHO DO YOU THINK WILL PROTECT THEM?
HUH ?
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF SERVING UNDER HIM!
DON'T TELL ME TO WAIT!
"HEAV-EN'S NET"
IT IS THE WEB THAT SPELLS OUT THE FUTURE OF THIS WORLD AND THE END OF ALL THINGS
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, YOU CANNOT CHANGE THE WILL OF HEAVEN !

BUT THE ONLY ONE ABLE TO SPIN A NEW WEB...
shhhhh
ONLY THE FOUR GODS ARE ABLE TO INTER-PRET IT.
IS TEITEN.
THE ONE WITH THE POWER OF THE "UN-WRITTEN PAGE."

AMATSUKI
TAKAYAMA SHINOBU
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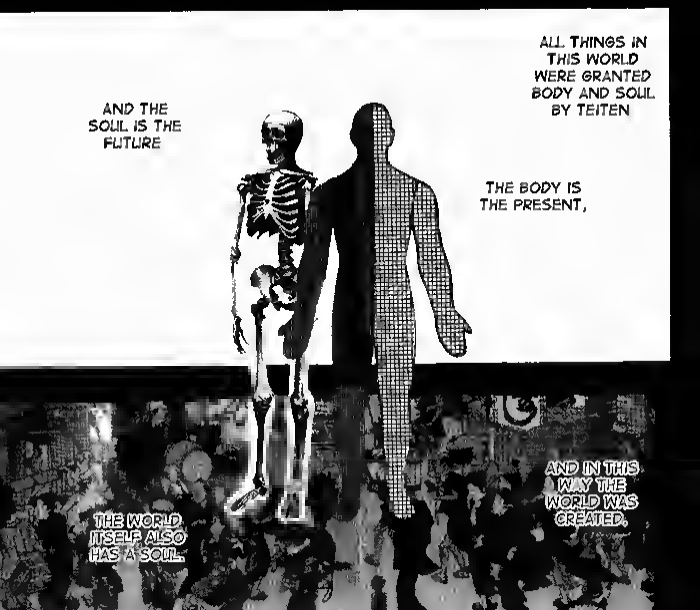

ALL THINGS IN THIS WORLD WERE GRANTED BODY AND SOUL BY TEITEN
AND THE SOUL IS THE FUTURE
THE BODY IS THE PRESENT,
THE WORLD ITSELF ALSO HAS A SOUL.
AND IN THIS WAY THE WORLD WAS CREATED.

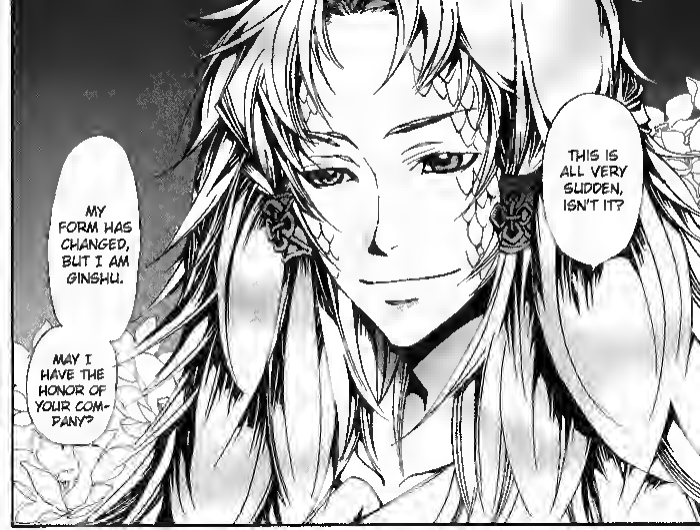
Source: "An Illustrated History of Famous Places in the Eastern Capital" - Visual Edition 3, published by Gakushukenkyusha.

Chapter II: Dawn and Awakening

PERHAPS BECAUSE YOU CAME HERE DURING THE HIGAN FESTIVAL
YOUR NAME IS NOT WRITTEN IN HEAVEN'S NET
AND THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN REDRAW THE NET IS TEITEN
YOU KNOW NOTHING OF THIS WORLD NOR OF THE AMATSUKI...
THEREFORE I CAN ONLY SURMISE THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN ASSIGNED A FATE BY TEITEN.
YOU ARE UNIQUE IN THIS WORLD...
WITH THE POWER OF THE "UN-WRITTEN PAGE."
A PERSON WHOSE FUTURE IS YET UN-DECIDED...

TN: HIGAN CELEBRATES THE EQUINOXES AND LITERALLY MEANS "THE OTHER SHORE." BUDDHISTS BELIEVE THAT A RIVER OF SORROW AND TRIALS SEPARATES THE WORLD FROM NIRVANA, AND THAT DURING HIGANA WEEK, BUDDHA COMES TO LEAD SOULS ACROSS THE RIVER.

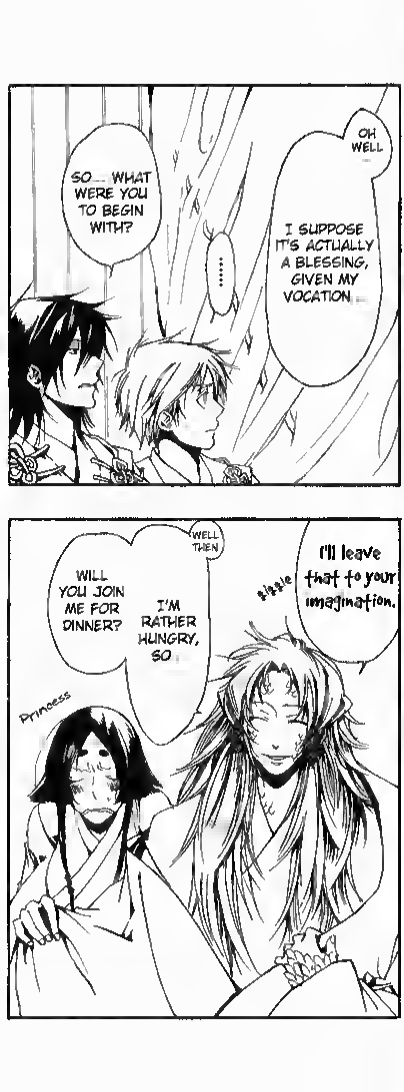
Chapter II. Dawn and Awakening


THIS IS ALL VERY SUDDEN, ISN'T IT?
MY FORM HAS CHANGED, BUT I AM GINSHU.
MAY I HAVE THE HONOR OF YOUR COMPANY?

UH—
YEAH, THERE IS ONE THING

CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING FIRST?

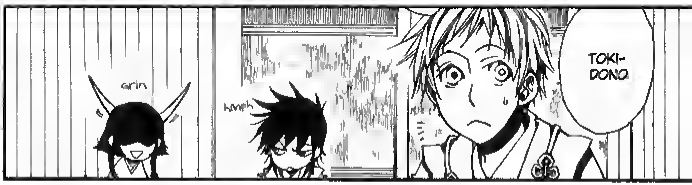
ARE YOU A GUY!?
I CAN'T TELL AND IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY!
HOW CAN YOU SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT!!!
ARGH !!
HO HO HO HO HO!
IT'S ALRIGHT, TSURU-LIME
IT IS A BIT DIFFI-CULT TO UNDER-STAND
sparkle
sparkle
TRADITION-ALLY, THE PRIESTESSES THAT DO THE WORK OF THE GODS HAVE BEEN SEEN AS ASEXUAL
There was nothing to see...?
huh?
GAAAH!! I saw every-thing!!
shock

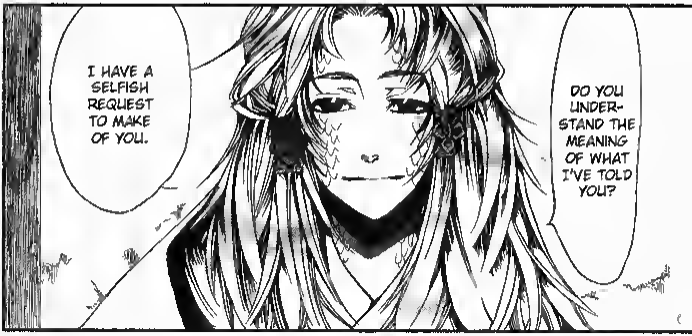

WOMEN ACT AS MEN AND MEN ACT AS WOMEN THIS IS OUR CUSTOM.
FU FU
BUT DUE TO MY CURSE, THE BLURRING OF GENDER ROLES HAS BECOME QUITE LITERAL IN ME.
OH WELL...
I SUPPOSE IT'S ACTUALLY A BLESSING, GIVEN MY VOCATION...
SO... WHAT WERE YOU TO BEGIN WITH?
.....
I'll leave that to your imagination.
WELL THEN
WILL YOU JOIN ME FOR DINNER?
I'M RATHER HUNGRY, SO...
Princess

SOUNDS GOOD! LET'S GO!♪
HE'S AWFULLY QUICK!!!

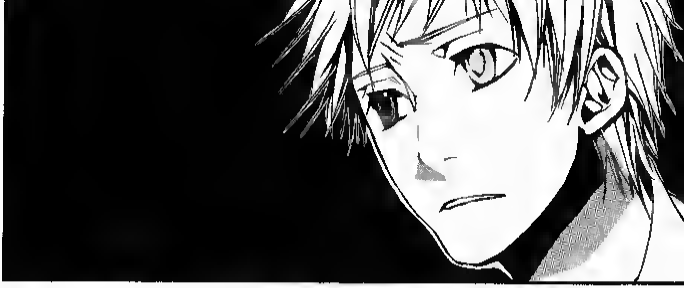
WHAT DO WE HAVE...
OOOH, TOFU IN MISO, TOFU IN FISH SAUCE,
SPIRAL SLICED TOFU, TOFU SOUP...
SEA-SONED TOFU,
AND FOR DESERT, CHILLED TOFU WITH BROWN SUGAR SYRUP ON TOP!
SFX. -STARE-

I need meat....
IT'S ALL-TOFU CUISINE!
HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
I feel weak...
CRUSHED
Was hoping for meat too.
slop
We have 100 kinds of tofu!

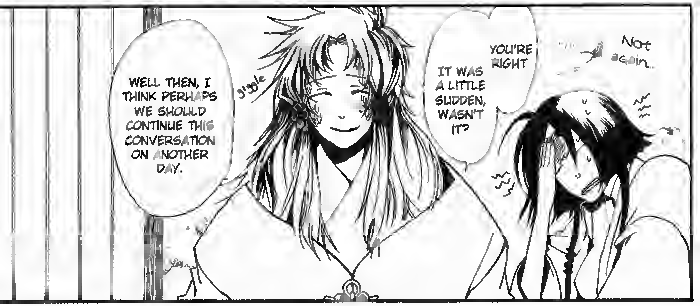

grin
TOKI-DONO

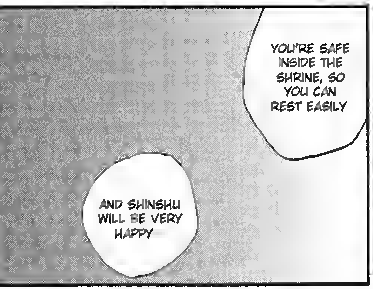

I HAVE A SELFISH REQUEST TO MAKE OF YOU.
DO YOU UNDER-STAND THE MEANING OF WHAT I'VE TOLD YOU?

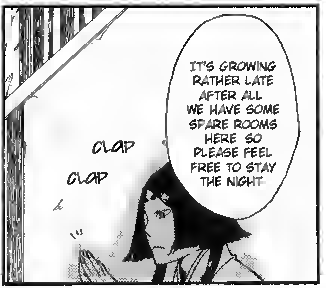
I ASK THIS OF YOU ON BEHALF OF ALL THE DOWNTRODDEN, SUFFERING PEOPLE THAT I HAVE SEEN.
WE CANNOT ESCAPE HEAVEN'S NET
I NEED YOUR HELP.
TOKI-DONO...
YOU HAVE GREAT POWER AND GREAT POSSIBILITY
I ASK YOU TO LEND US YOUR STRENGTH



COLLAPSE
It was too much all at once...
YOU BROKE HIS BRAIN.
STARE


WELL THEN, I THINK PERHAPS WE SHOULD CONTINUE THIS CONVERSATION ON ANOTHER DAY.
giggle
IT WAS A LITTLE SUDDEN, WASN'T IT?
YOU'RE RIGHT
Not again.


YOU'RE SAFE INSIDE THE SHRINE, SO YOU CAN REST EASILY
AND SHINSHU WILL BE VERY HAPPY


IT'S GROWING RATHER LATE AFTER ALL WE HAVE SOME SPARE ROOMS HERE SO PLEASE FEEL FREE TO STAY THE NIGHT
CLAP
CLAP

PACE
PACE
PACE
SFX: SLAM
YOU'RE TOO DAMNED NOISY!!

OWWW!!!
DON'T YOU KNOW HOW ANNOYING IT IS WHEN YOU RUSTLE YOUR FEATHERS WHILE I'M TRYING TO SLEEP!!!?
PU
PU
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU!?
BUT THIS IS SERIOUS, ISN'T IT!!? HE CAN'T TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF!!! ALL WE CAN DO IS WAIT FOR HIM...!!
WHATEVER! I'M GOING BACK TO SLEEP!!
TSUYUKUSA'S GONE OFF TO FLY BY HIMSELF WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION!
BUT BON...
I HAD SOMETHING TO TELL YOU...
I SHALL GO
WELL, IF NAPOLEON SAYS SO, IT MUST BE GOOD
MMM HMM
close enough
I BET THAT'S WHAT NAPOLEON WOULD SAY IN THIS SITUATION ...
pull
SERIOUS!?
GLARE
YOU WANNA KNOW WHAT'S SERIOUS!!?
IT'S GONNA BE SERIOUS WHEN I GET TO THAT LITTLE BASTARD!!!

YOU THINK I SHOULD DECEIVE HIM INTO COMING HERE LIKE THE PRINCESS DID?
HMM.
...BON.
THAT'S NOT VERY NICE, UTSUBUSHI...
WHY CAN WE NOT BRING THE HAKUTAKU HERE?

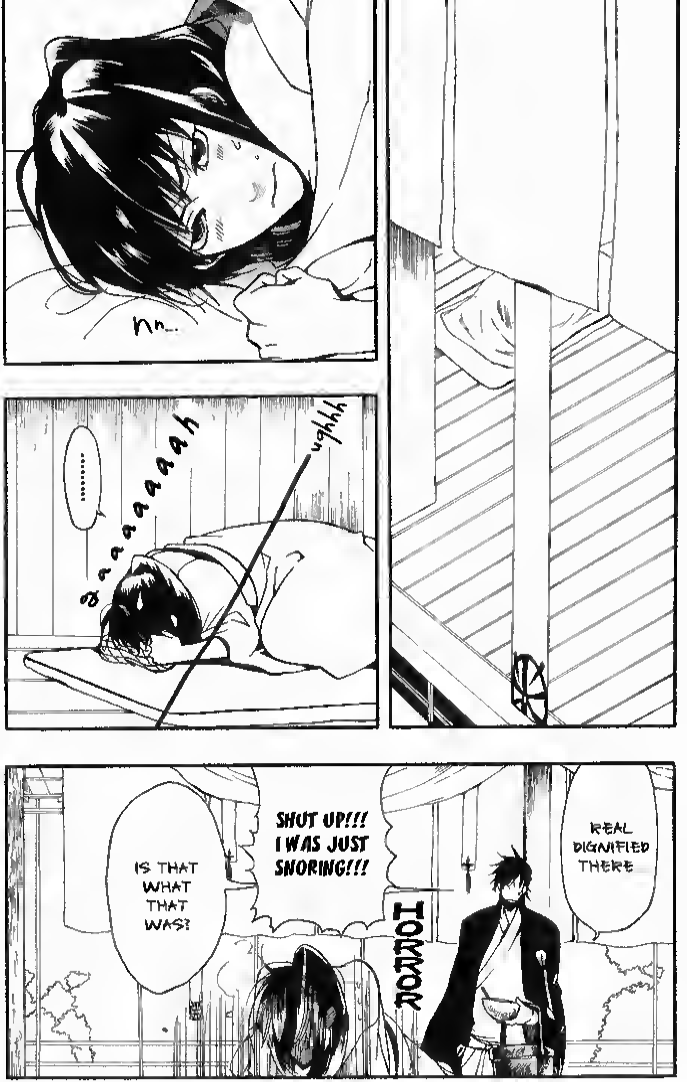
TN: HAKUTAKU IS THE JAPANESE VERSION OF THE CHINESE LEGENDARY BEAST BAI ZE, SORT OF LIKE A COW WITH SIX EYES AND A HUMAN FACE. HAKUTAKU ARE VERY WISE AND BRING HEALTH AND GOOD LUCK.

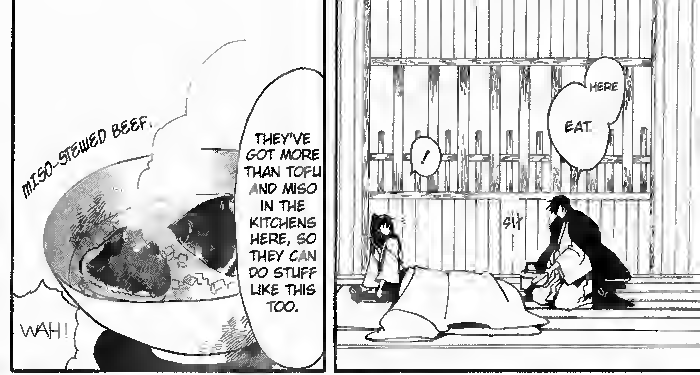
WHO KNOWS WHAT HIS ROLE IN THIS WILL BE
BESIDES, I'M HARDLY THE KIND OF PERSON WHO CAN MAKE HIM STRONGER
AND IF THE PRINCESS WANTS HIM, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE HE TRIES TO GO

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, THEN?
JUST RELAX.
RIGHT NOW, HE'S STILL IGNORANT AND WEAK.
BUT HE'S NOT STUPID.
SO FOR NOW, WE WAIT.

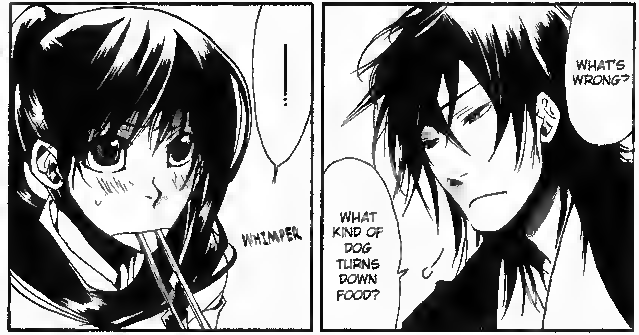
HOW TYPICAL THAT EGO OF YOURS KNOWS NO BOUNDS, DOES IT?
IF YOU DON'T HAVE FAITH IN ME, HOW CAN YOU HAVE FAITH IN ANY-THING?
I KNOW THESE THINGS
HE WILL BECOME MY WEAPON AND MY SHIELD.

COME ON, UTSUBUSHI!!
ANYONE WHO BECOMES MY ENEMY WILL SUFFER!!
BUT I CRUSH FOOLS IN THE PALM OF MY HAND.
I'LL REACH OUT TO ANYONE ...


nn...
.....
aaaaaaaaah
uhhh
REAL DIGNIFIED THERE
SHUT UP!!! I WAS JUST SNORING!!!
IS THAT WHAT THAT WAS?
HORROR


MISO-STEWED BEEF.
THEY'VE GOT MORE THAN TOFU AND MISO IN THE KITCHENS HERE, SO THEY CAN DO STUFF LIKE THIS TOO.
WAH!
HERE
EAT.
/
GIY

IF YOU'RE SO HUNGRY, THEN WHY AREN'T YOU EATING?
GAAAAA
N... NO !!!!
I'M STRUGGLING!! IT'S DANGEROUS!! I COULD EAT YOU!!


!!
WHIMPER
WHAT'S WRONG?
WHAT KIND OF DOG TURNS DOWN FOOD?

WHAT !?
surprise
WHO'S STUPID !?
I'M SURE HE'LL FORGIVE YOU IF YOU QUIT ACTING SO STUPID
COME ON.

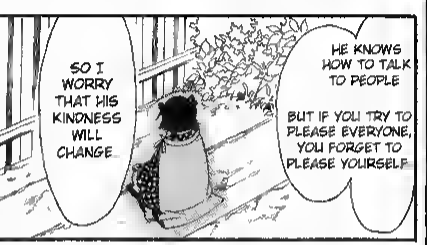
...YOU'RE ALWAYS SO BLUNT...
BUT I WAS HOPING THAT TOKI WOULDN'T HAVE TO FIND OUT ABOUT ME...
sigh

I THINK HE KIND OF LIKES YOU.
SO IT'S OKAY TO LET YOUR GUARD DOWN SOMETIMES.

WHAT IF HE'S WRONG ABOUT ME?

AT FIRST I THOUGHT HE WAS SOME SOFT, STUPID BRAT...
HE CAN BE TOTALLY LOST, BUT HE NEVER WORRIES.
I USED TO HATE PEOPLE LIKE THAT.
BUT I DUNNO, SOMEHOW WE STARTED TO GET ATTACHED TO HIM...
THE WAY HE CAN STAND UP AND TAKE ACTION FOR SOMEONE ELSE, EVEN AT THE RISK OF HIS OWN LIFE—
IT'S KIND OF COOL
IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT YOU SEE IT, BUT BENEATH HIS WEAK-NESSES...
HE'S REALLY A STRONG, KIND PERSON

MAYBE HE'S JUST GOOD AT READING PEOPLE'S FEELINGS AND DESIRES.


HE KNOWS HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE
BUT IF YOU TRY TO PLEASE EVERYONE, YOU FORGET TO PLEASE YOURSELF.
SO I WORRY THAT HIS KINDNESS WILL CHANGE

CIRCUM-STANCES CHANGE PEOPLE
IT COULD HAPPEN TO HIM TOO.

THERE'S A HIDDEN SIDE TO EVERY-THING.

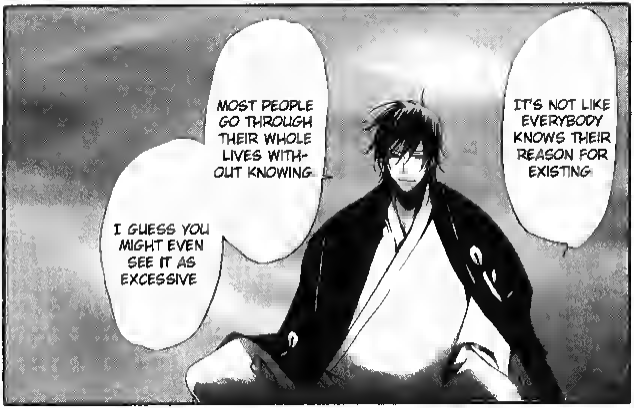
MAYBE THAT'S JUST WHAT HE WANTS US TO SEE, THOUGH
HE CAN CHANGE WHO HE IS DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION

IN EVERYONE THERE IS A BUDDHA...
BUT ALSO A DEMON...

I WONDER IF HE'S BEEN FOOLING US ALL ALONG...
WHAT!?
IF YOU'RE JUST GONNA SIT HERE AND TALK, THEN GET ME A SECOND HELPING!!
SHOVE
I THOUGHT YOU WEREN'T GOING TO EAT IT

AND ONCE TO FIND A REASON FOR LIVING.
DRIP
DRIP
ONCE JUST TO BE ALIVE,
OH WELL.
?
WHO AM I TO JUDGE THE WAY OTHER PEOPLE LIVE?
...*WE ARE, SO TO SPEAK, BORN TWICE:
ONCE TO EXIST AND ONCE TO LIVE.*
DIDN'T ROUSSEAU SAY THAT?

AS THE FAMOUS FRENCH WRITER JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU IN "EMILIE."


IT'S NOT LIKE EVERYBODY KNOWS THEIR REASON FOR EXISTING.
MOST PEOPLE GO THROUGH THEIR WHOLE LIVES WITHOUT KNOWING.
I GUESS YOU MIGHT EVEN SEE IT AS EXCESSIVE

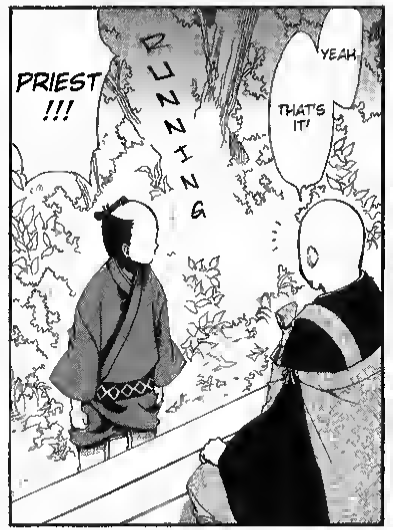
SO TEAM
DAMN
I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW TO FIND HAPPI-NESS
OKAY
MAYBE I'LL TAKE A WALK IN THE GARDEN TO CLEAR MY HEAD
DAMNED STRAIGHT! THINKING ABOUT STUFF LIKE THAT CAN'T BE GOOD FOR YOU
slurp
PEOPLE ARE.. REALLY DIFFICULT.
HEY!
THAT KUSOU GUY YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT HE MUST BE A PRIEST SO DON'T SAY HE'S DIFFICULT!!
JUST SHUT UP AND EAT.
nod nod
That's like insulting Shamon-sama!
T/N: KUCHIKI PHONETICALLY SPELLS "ROUSSEAU" WITH THE CHARACTERS FOR "FLOWING" (流-RU) AND "PRIEST" (司-SHI). SO SHE ASSUMES HE MUST

KON AND THE OTHERS
STILL AREN'T BACK YET?

HUH ?

OH, WERE YOU SUPPOSED TO MEET?
NAH – I MEAN, NO, SIR.
IT'S JUST THAT THEY WENT OUT REALLY EARLY THIS MORNING, SO I THOUGHT THEY'D BE BACK BY NOW.
OH –

WHERE DID THEY GO?
...MAYBE YOU SHOULDN'T GET TOO INVOLVED WITH THEM...
AHEM
...HUH!?
YEAH, THEY WENT HOME— NO, WAIT, THEY DIDN'T TELL ME WHERE THEY WERE GOING!
THEY, UH... WENT BACK HOME TO VISIT FOR A WHILE... YEAH, WHAT WAS I SAYING?
OH... SHIT, UM... YEAH...
fidget
squirm
squirm
?

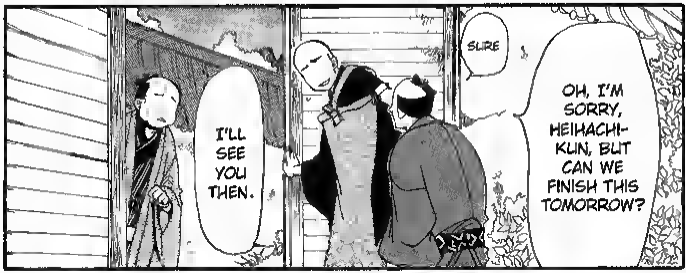

PRIEST !!!
RUNNING
YEAH
THAT'S IT!

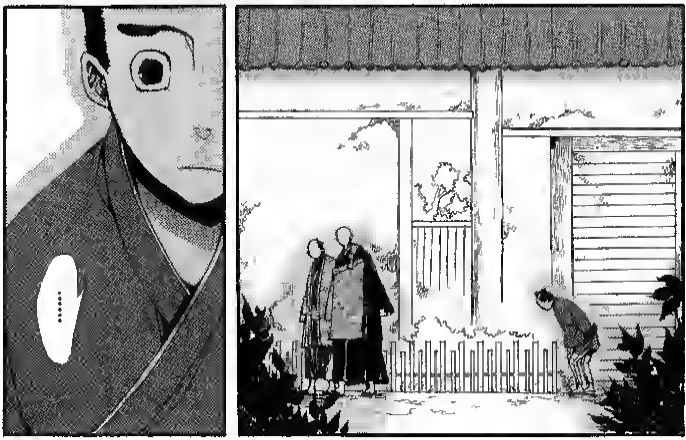
THOSE GUYS...
I KNEW THEY WERE FROM OUT OF TOWN, BUT THEY JUST WENT HOME?

ALRIGHT, NAKAMURAYA-SAN
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE
SHIT
AGAIN...? IT'S BEEN A LOT LATELY...
//

I'M NAKAMURAYA GENPACHI! I SPOKE WITH YOU THE OTHER DAY! PLEASE, I NEED YOUR HELP!!
PLEASE, COME QUICKLY !!

You've had a lot of funerals lately?
?
WAH!
AHAHA, NO, DON'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO ME!
IT'S JUST A LITTLE SIDE JOB, NOTHING WORTH MENTIONING!


OH, I'M SORRY, HEIHACHI-KUN, BUT CAN WE FINISH THIS TOMORROW?
SURE
I'LL SEE YOU THEN.

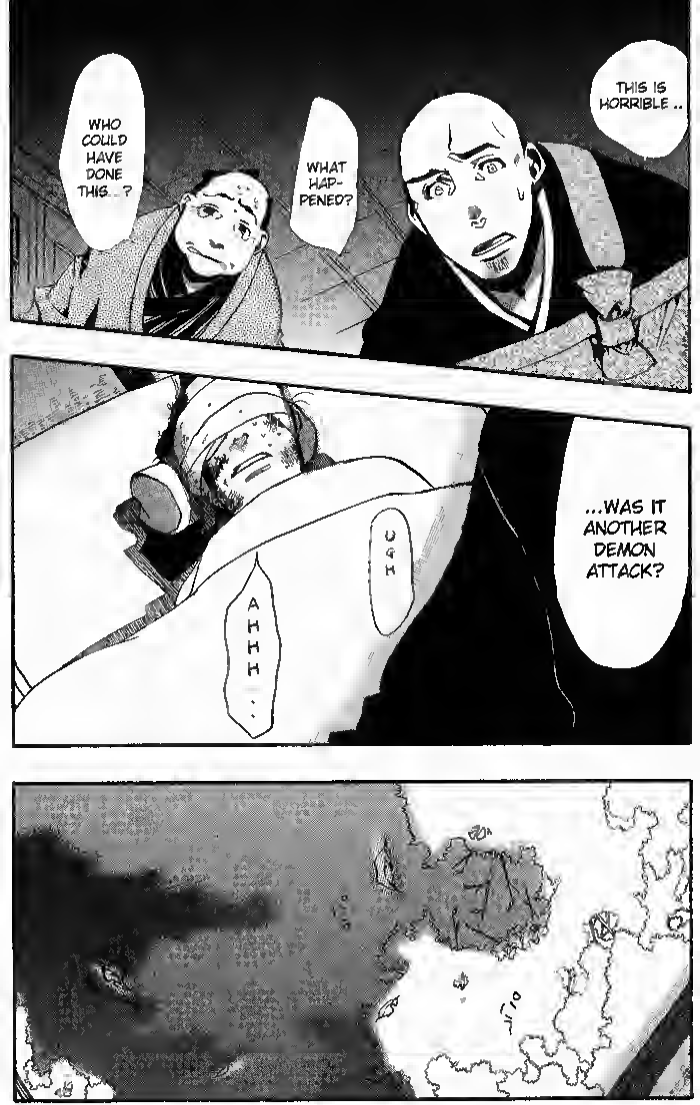

.....

!
HUH?
HEY, KON. WHERE'S YOUR HOMETOWN?
REALLY REALLY FAR AWAY.

IT'S NOT LIKE I'M LONELY OR ANYTHING!!
DAMN IT!!
UWAAH

DID HE REALLY GO HOME...?

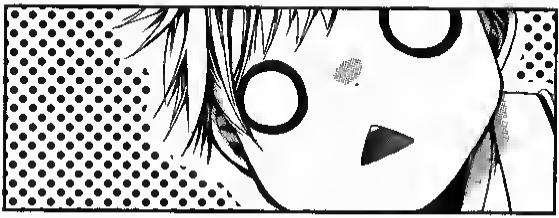
カ
!?


THIS IS HORRIBLE..
WHAT HAP-PENED?
WHO COULD HAVE DONE THIS...?
...WAS IT ANOTHER DEMON ATTACK?
UGH
AHHH.

I THOUGHT THERE WAS GONNA BE A BARRIER HERE!!
mmph!
OW... DAMN IT!! WHERE DID HE GO RUNNING OFF TO!?
mmpu!
.....
WHAT'S THAT?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
Huh...?
.....

AMATSUKI
TAKAYAMA SHINOBU
ISBN 4-7580 5187 9

Chapter 12:
No One Knows



!

.....

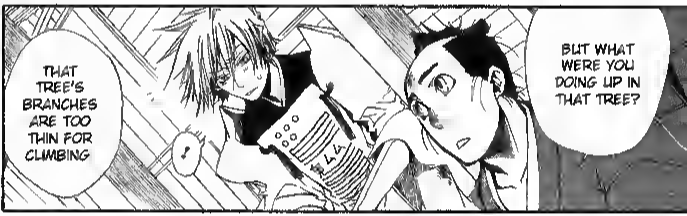
What!?
WAH!!
WHOOSH

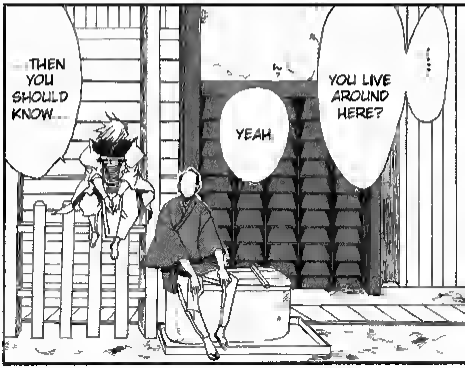
...WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
?
GLOCK!

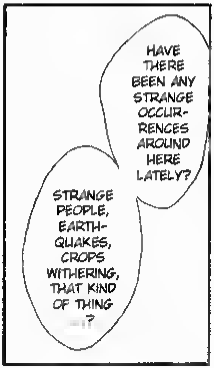
AH...
drip
ARE YOU OKAY!?
GRAB
AH...
THUMP
SFX - EVIL
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU WEIRDO!? STAY AWAY FROM ME!!
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT HURT?
YES I'M SURE, NOW LET GO OF ME!!
ARE YOU REALLY SURE...?
Huh?

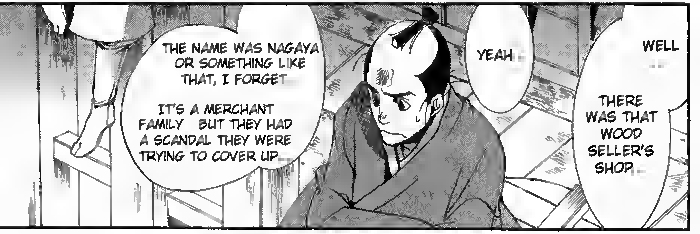
HOW'S THAT? DID THE BLOOD STOP?
YEAH, I THINK SO.
IT DID?
I USED THE JUICE FROM A SHOUJIOU ROOT.
IT'S GOOD FOR STOPPING BLOOD.
...
TN: SHOUJIOU IS CALLED SHENG JI HUANG IN CHINESE MEDICINE, AND REHMANNIA OR CHINESE FOXGLOVE IN ENGLISH. IT'S HIGH IN IRON AND IS USED TO TREAT BLOOD-RELATED CONDITIONS.
AND IT PREVENTS ANEMIA, SO YOU SHOULD BOIL SOME IN WATER AND DRINK IT.
AND DISINFECT THE WOUND EVERY DAY WITH HONEYSUCKLE FLOWER.
WHEN IT STARTS TO BRUISE, SCORCH SOME TSUWABUKI LEAVES AND MAKE A PASTE TO PUT ON IT.
TN: HONEYSUCKLE FLOWER (KINGINKA IN JAPANESE, JIN YIN HUA IN CHINESE) IS USED TO HEAL SORES. TSUWABUKI IS FARFUGIUM JAPONICUM IN ENGLISH, AND IS USED TO REDUCE INFLAMMATION.
YOU SAVED ME,
SO I CAN AT LEAST REPAY YOU IN PLANTS.
...WHAT?

OH NO,
I WAS JUST THINKING,
YOU'RE PRETTY NICE!
...


BUT WHAT WERE YOU DOING UP IN THAT TREE?
THAT TREE'S BRANCHES ARE TOO THIN FOR CLIMBING
!


YOU LIVE AROUND HERE?
YEAH.
...THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW...

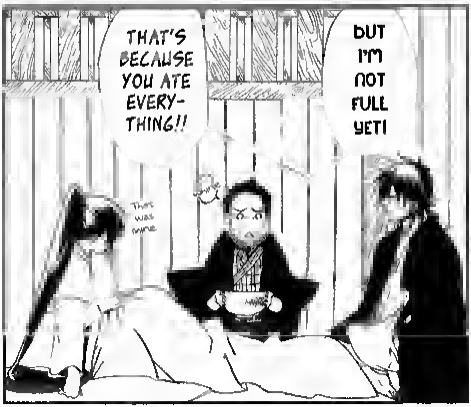

HAVE THERE BEEN ANY STRANGE OCCURRENCES AROUND HERE LATELY?
STRANGE PEOPLE, EARTHQUAKES, CROPS WITHERING, THAT KIND OF THING...?


WELL...
THERE WAS THAT WOOD SELLER'S SHOP...
YEAH...
THE NAME WAS NAGAYA OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, I FORGET.
IT'S A MERCHANT FAMILY. BUT THEY HAD A SCANDAL THEY WERE TRYING TO COVER UP...

...IT DOESN'T REALLY CONCERN ME, BUT...
TAKE ME THERE.
IN THAT SHOP....
SOMEONE WAS MURDERED

WE'RE ALL OUT OF TEA

THERE'S NO FOOD OR HOT WATER LEFT, EITHER


THAT'S BECAUSE YOU ATE EVERY-THING!!
BUT I'M NOT FULL YET!
That was mine.

!!!
REALLY ?

OH, I SEE... AM I INTRUDING ON SOMETHING BETWEEN YOU TWO?
I'M SOOO SORRY IT JUST SMELLED SO GOOD!
Thanks for the meal!
It was Great!
...YEAH, WHATEVER
YOU JUST CAME TO EAVESDROP
TANUKI = JAPANESE RACCOON DOG
YOU REALLY ARE A SNEAKY OLD TANUKI
YOU CAN'T STAND NOT KNOWING SOMETHING
...
BUT I'VE KNOWN FROM THE START...
THAT SHE ISN'T NORMAL.
!?

WITHOUT SHAMON'S PERMISSION, OF COURSE...
DIDN'T I SAY I'D BEEN KEEPING AN EYE ON YOU?
BUT I'M RIGHT, AREN'T I?
YES...
ME...?
AS FAR AS WE KNOW, YOU WERE THE FIRST UN-WRITTEN PAGE
SO OF COURSE I KNOW...
THAT TOKIDOKI-KUN CAME FROM THAT OTHER PLACE AND THAT HE HAS THE POWER OF THE UNWRITTEN PAGE
AS DO YOU.
SIP
SO YOU WERE SURPRISED WHEN YOU SAW ITS POWER
BUT YOU HAD NO ONE TO GO BEFORE YOU,
I DIDN'T THINK THERE WERE ANY LEFT WITH THAT POWER

BUT EVER SINCE "FOREIGNERS" CAME HERE,
GAPS IN HEAVEN'S NET HAVE APPEARED.
THERE'S NO DOUBT THAT YOU'RE THE CAUSE.
YOU INTERACT WITH PEOPLE AND THEIR FUTURES ARE REWRITTEN.
drop
AND NO MATTER WHAT WE DO,
IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE.
AS FAR AS I KNOW, YOU CAME HERE A YEAR AGO.
C—R—A—S—H—
AT THAT TIME, YOU WERE A DELINQUENT.

Ahaha...
...YOU SOUND LIKE YOU KNOW EVERYTHING.
I like that idea!!
ARE YOU SOME KIND OF NINJA?

FU FU FU...
OR MAYBE IT'S JUST THAT YOU'RE SO FAMOUS?
YOU'RE VERY IMPORTANT...

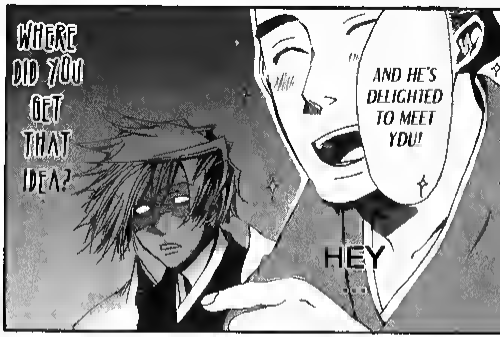
YOU'RE ALL A PART OF THESE EVENTS.

YOU HAVE BEEN SOUGHT OUT BY TEITEN.
WE WERE ALL CREATED ALONG WITH HEAVEN'S NET, SO WE ARE BOUND UP IN IT.
EVEN THE DAY WE DIE HAS ALREADY BEEN DECIDED.

HEI-HA-CHI, AND ...
I'M USED TO SEEING KON, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE MADE A NEW FRIEND!
AND THIS ONE ...
IS EVEN STRANGER THAN THE LAST, ISN'T HE?
HMM ...
tap tap
WHAT'S THIS?
SORRY TO DROP BY SO SUDDENLY ...
Excuse me!
Wow! He really needs a haircut!
BUT I THOUGHT THAT SINCE YOU'RE AN ELDER, MAYBE YOU COULD HELP ME...

TEXT: WHY THE HELL AM I HERE?
WELL, THAT'S GOOD!
TEXT: THIS IS BORING, AND I'M HUNGRY!
.....
HMM?
I'M AN OLD MAN WITH NOTHING TO DO. TALKING TO YOU YOUNG ONES KEEPS ME ENTERTAINED
HA HA HA
YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SO POLITE

HMM


WHERE DID YOU GET THAT IDEA?
AND HE'S DELIGHTED TO MEET YOU!
HEY

Ow that hurts!
AND HE TOLD ME SOMETHING VERY STRANGE...
I TALKED TO THE DOCTOR YESTERDAY,
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...

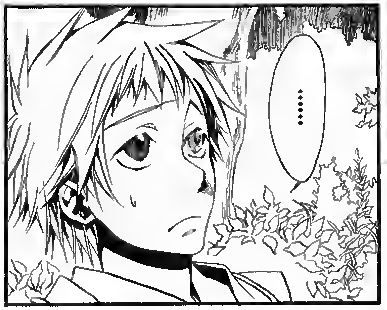
YOU KNOW NAKAMURAYA, DON'T YOU?
THERE'S A PIPE SHOP THERE IN THE TOORI-HONMACHI NEIGHBORHOOD...
THE LAST STOP ON HIS ROUNDS IS IN NIHONBASHI...

!
THE STRANGE PART WAS THAT THE ACCIDENT HAPPENED IN A STOREROOM, FAR FROM ANY SOURCE OF FIRE
WELL, THE DOCTOR HEARD THAT THE OWNER OF THE STORE HAD BEEN BURNED IN A FIRE AND NEEDED MEDICAL HELP...
THEN TAKE ME THERE!
HUH?
YEAH, SORT OF...
HEY, DO YOU KNOW WHERE THAT PLACE IS?
SFX: -JUMP!-
TAKE CARE!
BYE!
I'LL VISIT AGAIN SOON!
BE QUIET! IT MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE!!
HEY, WAIT A MINUTE!!
CRASH
THAT HURTS!!
I'M FINE...
I WILL, I WILL...

THINGS ARE REALLY STARTING TO HAPPEN
SASA-KI-SAMA WILL BE HAPPY ABOUT THAT
HMM.
WELL, I HAD BETTER WRITE THIS DOWN.
BUT THEY ARE INTER-ESTING...
KON, AND HEIHACHI, AND SHAMON, AND KUCHIHA...
AND THAT BOY THEY CALL "TOKI"...

WHAT'S WRONG?
...

...
SHIN-SHU-CHAN?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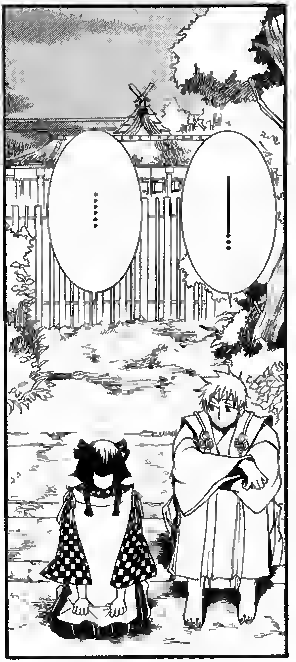

.....
.....

Surprise
JUST NOW
GINSHU-SAN TOLD ME A LOT OF STUFF.
ABOUT ME, AND ABOUT HERSELF.

EVERYBODY HERE SEEMS TO THINK THAT I'M SOMETHING WONDERFUL.
BECAUSE I HAVE SOME WEIRD POWER... AND I KNOW THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR ME TO MAKE A MIRACLE.
BUT THAT'S A PRETTY HEAVY EXPECTATION...
YOU KNOW, I ONLY CAME HERE BECAUSE I THOUGHT SOMEBODY COULD TELL ME HOW TO GO HOME?
I KNOW IT'S BAD OF ME
BUT I JUST NEVER THOUGHT I WAS ANYTHING SPECIAL
BUT...
BUT YOU DO HAVE A SPECIAL POWER!
EVEN YOU CAN'T HELP US.
BUT...

THE PRINCESS DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG!
PRIN-CESS!
I'LL READY A MEDICATED BATH!
cough cough
ff...ff...
THE PRINCESS WAS JUST TRYING TO SAVE EVERY-ONE...
HE WAS TRYING TO SAVE ME...!!
cough
SHINSHU-SAMA, PLEASE DON'T GET IN THE PRINCESS'S WAY.
BUT HE PROMISED TO PLAY WITH ME TODAY!
OH DEAR...
BUT A FAMOUS PRIEST IS VISITING TODAY...
THERE ARE OTHER VISITORS AS WELL...
AND SASAKI-SAMA IS VISITING IN THE AFTER-NOON
The secret slain meaning ← "won't this be fun?"
FINE, THEN!!
AH! SHIN-SHU-SAMA...!

IT'S YOU AGAIN
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HEY, YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST HANG OUT WITH US?
OH, SHE'S STRANGE, BUT LIKABLE ENOUGH.
WHAT SHALL WE PLAY TODAY?
YOU'RE ALWAYS IN THAT TREE YOU CAN'T COME INSIDE THE MAGIC BARRIER.

WELL, I AM ACTING AS YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER
AND IT WOULD MAKE YOU HAPPY, WOULDN'T IT?
BUT NOBODY WOULD HAVE TO KNOW
YOU'RE A LITTLE ROUGH, BUT I THINK YOU'RE VERY NICE AND FUN TO PLAY WITH
OF COURSE! YOU'LL MAKE FRIENDS, RIGHT?
I CAN PLAY WITH THEM!?
Oh, well. It's okay!
BUT I MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE ...
HEY!

MAYBE IF YOU SAVE HER...
YOU HAVE TO HELP THE PRINCESS!!
THE CURSE WILL BE LIFTED !!
I WAS SO STUPID ...!!
IT WAS ME!
THE PRINCESS DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG!
I WAS NAIVE.. IT WAS MY FAULT..
IF ANYONE SHOULD BE PUNSIHED..
IT'S ME...!!

PLEASE ...!!
.....!
OKAY
!

I DIDN'T BRING A HANDKER-CHIEF! I'LL GET SNOT ON MY HANDS!!!
SFX: ~SOMETHING LOUD~
BUT I DON'T THINK I REALLY HAVE ANY OF THE POWERS YOUR PRINCESS TALKED ABOUT
!
OH WELL
silence
!!!!
Ahh
IT'S KIND OF SCARY...
IF I DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN MYSELF, HOW CAN I HELP PEOPLE?
rub

WE'RE A LOT ALIKE. THERE ARE PEOPLE PROTECTING US

BUT WE CAN'T LET OURSELVES BECOME A BURDEN ON THEM.
WE CAN'T SAY THAT THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO

BUT...
IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP, I WILL

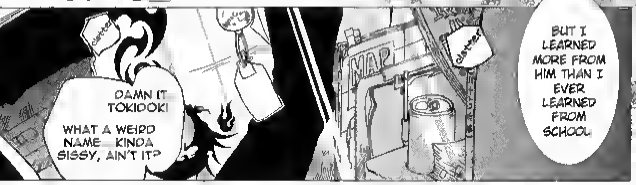
SO NOW THAT I'M HERE, I STILL KEEP THINK-ING THAT WAY.
SINCE I ALREADY KNEW I COULDN'T DO ANY-THING, I PASSED UP EVERY CHANCE I HAD TO DO SOME-THING
THE WORLD USED TO BE SO ORDINARY, AND I WAS ORDINARY TOO.
I WASN'T SCARED BEFORE
BUT NOW THERE'S THIS HUGE RE-SPONSIBILITY BEING THRUST UPON ME...
I... I'M NOT READY FOR THIS.
YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD.
EVEN IF YOU DON'T YET KNOW IT YOUR-SELF
...I DON'T KNOW.
I STILL DON'T BELIEVE IT.

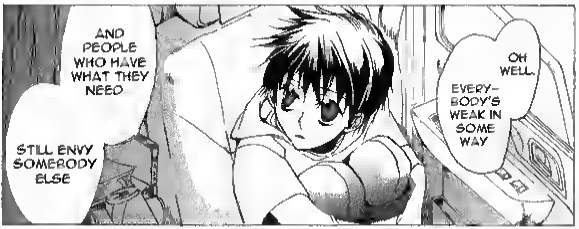
I GUESS IT WOULD BE EASIER IF I WERE MORE COOL AND HEROIC...
BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN.
I FIGURE I'LL PROBABLY JUST SCREW UP.
BUT....
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE LIKE THAT.
AS MUCH AS I'M ABLE...
I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN.
...BUT I GUESS THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF RESPONSE YOU WERE HOPING FOR?
YEAH.
...
BUT...

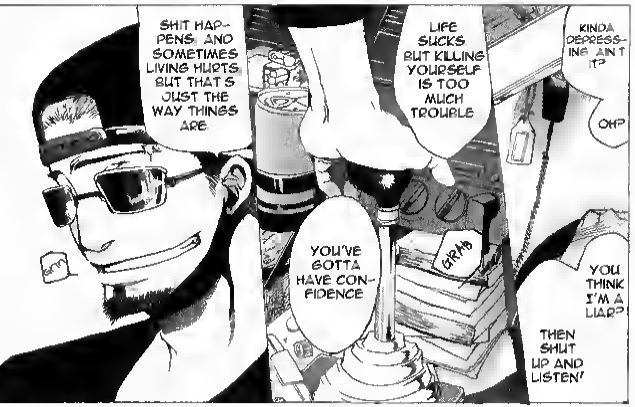
BUT IT'S OKAY.
THANK YOU.

WHAT !?
A LONG TIME AGO HE DID SOMETHING BAD, SO HE CAN SEEM SCARY.
A REALLY GREAT PERSON, JUST LIKE GINSHU-SAN

HEY, SHINSHU-CHAN, WE'VE GOT A LOT IN COMMON I DON'T HAVE ANY PARENTS EITHER, SO I LIVE WITH SOMEONE ELSE
.....
SOME-ONE ELSE?


DAMN IT TOKIOOK!
WHAT A WEIRD NAME... KINDA SISSY, AIN'T IT?
NAP
BUT I LEARNED MORE FROM HIM THAN I EVER LEARNED FROM SCHOOL


AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE WHAT THEY NEED
STILL ENVY SOMEBODY ELSE
OH WELL.
EVERY-BODY'S WEAK IN SOME WAY


SHIT HAP-PENS. AND SOMETIMES LIVING HURTS. BUT THAT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE.
LIFE SUCKS BUT KILLING YOURSELF IS TOO MUCH TROUBLE
KINDA DEPRESS-ING, AIN'T IT?
OH?
GRAB
YOU'VE GOTTA HAVE CON-FIDENCE
YOU THINK I'M A LIAR?
THEN SHUT UP AND LISTEN!

YOU'VE GOTTA THINK POSITIVE
IF YOU WANNA GET THROUGH LIFE,
SOMETIMES YOU CAN'T SAVE EV-ERYBODY.
WHEN TIMES GET ROUGH, SOMETIMES YOU CAN DO EVERYTHING IN YOUR POWER AND YOU STILL CAN'T WIN.
BUT MAYBE WE USED TO BE ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE LAW.
...I GOT THIS HAR-MONICA FROM A COP.
AND THE GUY WHO GOT ME THIS JOB IS A LAWYER.

IT'S OKAY TO BE SURPRISED
BUT DON'T JUDGE PEOPLE
YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT YOU OR ANYBODY ELSE IS CAPABLE OF
AND USE THE POWER YOU HAVE
YOU'RE GONNA HAFTA LEARN TO STAND ON YOUR OWN.
I'LL DO WHAT I CAN...
BONTEN.
THERE'S NOT MUCH I CAN DO NOW. BUT

YOU PROMISED ME INFORMATION.
AND I HAVE A FEELING ...
THAT YOU KNOW EVERYTHING

HAHAHA, YOU MUST REALLY BE HIS LITTLE SISTER...
BUT TO LET THE BARRIER DOWN SO CARELESSLY, YOUR LUCK MUST HAVE RUN OUT.
YOU CAN DIE TOGETHER!
SHIN...
RUN...
IT WAS A TRAP.
IT HAD ALL BEEN...
A TRAP.

AMATSUKI
TAKAYAMA SHINOBU
ISBN 4-7580 5187 9

RUSTLE
RUSTLE
SURPRISE
HMM?
?
CAREFUL, LITSUBUSHI.
Chapter 13 : Miatsukushi

SFX: "CRACKLE"
OH!

Chapter 13. Miotsukushi

PRIN-CESS... IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO FOR YOU?
IF THE PAIN IS TOO GREAT ...
I'M HUMAN AGAIN...
PAIN IS NOTHING
IT'S JUST ANOTHER CONTAINER FOR MY SOUL, BUT ...
I'M HUMAN ...
BUT EVEN LIKE THIS,
IT'S STRANGE— FEAR, JOY, PAIN, PLEA-SURE..
THEY ALL SEEM SO DISTANT AND UNREAL...
I HAVE MY LIFE—
BUT ONE DAY... I MAY LOSE MYSELF
PRIN-CESS...
...AND THAT DOES FRIGHTEN ME...

FOR ENEMIES LIKE US TO PASS THROUGH THE BARRIER...
WE MUST HAVE BEEN INVITED...
?
!?
!?
WAS THAT TOO SUDDEN? THIS IS ..
BRX - CRACKLE!!
BRX - CRACKLE
WITHOUT YOU...
WHAT WOULD WE DO, PRINCESS?
DON'T SAY THAT ...!
YOU'D BE ALRIGHT, TSURUME
I CAN'T LEAVE HER YET
BUT ...
STILL

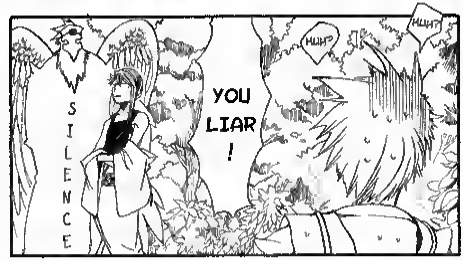
THE FIRST TIME WE'VE MET FACE-TO-FACE...
ISN'T IT?
—WELL THEN—
flap flap
—I DON'T THINK THIS IS A TRAP, BUT I WAS RATHER SURPRISED.
AFTER ALL, THE SPIRITUAL BARRIER AROUND THE SHRINE IS SUPPOSED TO REPEL ALL UNINVITED OUTSIDERS.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING !!?
IF WE'RE CAUGHT HERE...
WE'LL BE KILLED !!!
EEEEEEEE
CHILL OUT, UTSUBUSHI.

I DON'T WANT MY IGNORANCE TO GET IN THE WAY.
THE HAKUTAKU IS THE SMART ONE...

BARRIER ?
HUH?
DON'T TELL ME YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THE BARRIER.

WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH ME?
...WELL?

HOW TO LIFT THE PRINCESS'S CURSE.
...PLEASE TELL ME...


SILENCE
YOU LIAR !
HUH?
HUH?

I'M NOT YOUR DAMNED ENCYCLOPEDIA!
YOU CALLED ME IN HERE TO ANSWER A STUPID QUESTION LIKE THAT?

YOU'D TELL ME EVERY-THING.
YOU TOLD ME THAT IF I SIDED WITH YOU,
BUT YOU SAID IT YOUR-SELF.

I REFUSE !!

I COULD KILL YOU SO EASILY RIGHT NOW...
I DON'T THINK YOU'D BE ON THEIR SIDE
BUT IF YOU KNEW WHAT WAS REALLY GOING ON IN THIS WORLD,
I RATHER LIKE THIS WORLD.
SO I WON'T PARDON ANYONE WHO OP-POSES ME.

SHIN-SHU-CHAN!?

WAH!

SFX: ~SMACK!~

I HATE YOU !!
YOU'RE SO STUPID !!!
GO AWAY, YOU STUPID MON-STERS !!

SHE'S RIGHT, THOUGH
YOU PROBABLY COULD UNDO THE CURSE

YOU COWARD !!
Pain
WHY WON'T YOU HELP THE PRIN-CESS!?
HAHAHA WHAT A STUPID LITTLE BRAT

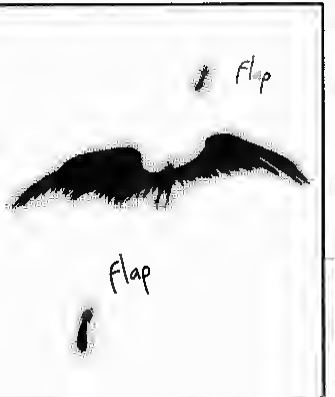
NOT THAT THAT HORRIBLE PERSON...
WOULD EVER HELP MONSTERS LIKE US.
!!
THAT'S ENOUGH !!
THERE'S NO POINT IN STAYING HERE
WE HAVE WORK TO DO.
SORRY, BUT WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CUT THIS VISIT SHORT.
Ah.
WE CAN'T VERY WELL START A FIGHT IN THE ENEMY'S STRONGHOLD
AND IT'S NOT LIKE I'D TAKE ORDERS FROM SOMEONE ELSE.
DID YOU THINK I WAS SO ALTRUISTIC THAT I'D HELP MY ENEMY?
IF YOU WANT TO GO BACK TO THE OTHER WORLD,
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT.
...IF YOU WANT TO RETURN, THAT IS

THERE ARE SOME OTHER THINGS I WANT TO DO FIRST.
HMM.
!
VERY WELL, I'LL GIVE YOU A HINT.
IF YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH OF THAT CURSE,
THEN COME TO ME.
AND BRING THE GIRL.

IF YOU BELIEVE IN ME, THEN WE'LL MEET AGAIN.
Flap
DO AS I ASK, AND THEN...

AT NIHONBASHI WHERE THE FOX CRIES

YOU'LL HAVE TO CHOOSE AGAIN BE-TWEEN THE PRINCESS AND ME


Flap
Flap

CHOOSE THE PRIN-CESS, AND YOU'LL HAVE NO NEED OF ME
IT'S ALL UP TO YOU.

!
NEED ...
YOU?

THEY WON'T COME BACK I'M SORRY THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SCARY
IT'S ALRIGHT

WH TEVER POWER I HAVE
MAYBE THERE'S STILL A WAY TO BREAK THE CURSE
I TOLD A LITTLE LIE, BUT DON'T THINK BADLY OF ME
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME

I CAN NEVER DO ANYTHING TO HELP
DAMN IT...
IF WE HAD CAUSED TROUBLE THERE, WE'D HAVE BEEN KILLED
THEN WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE!? WE'RE GOING TO GET CAUGHT!!
AH...
Surprise
IDIOT...
ALREADY THEY'VE GOT A BUNCH OF PRIESTESSES DEFENDING THE PLACE DIDN'T YOU NOTICE?
MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST DO WHATEVER WE HAVE TO DO TO DESTROY THAT SHRINE
Flap

DON'T FORGET ...
YOUR PUNISH-MENT HAS ALREADY BEEN DE-CIDED.
SFX :CRACKLE!
AFTER ALL....
A BIRD IN A CAGE CAN'T FLY, CAN IT?
!!

SFX: ~WHOOSH~

I'M SORRY.
I WAS ONLY TRYING TO GET INFORMA-TION.

TO INVITE THAT TENGU INSIDE THE BARRIER..
IT WAS FOR SHINSHU'S SAKE, BUT...

BUT...
AND I DON'T THINK THAT'S REALLY WHAT YOU WANT, EITHER
BUT I KNOW THAT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR POWER NOW.
...OF COURSE I WANT TO GO HOME... TO MY WORLD.
I WANT TO DO SOMETHING.
I WANT TO LOOK FOR A WAY TO BREAK YOUR CURSE
MAYBE SHINSHU-CHAN IS STRONGER THAN YOU THINK...
BUT WHENEVER SOMEONE ASKS FOR MY HELP
BUT AT LEAST...

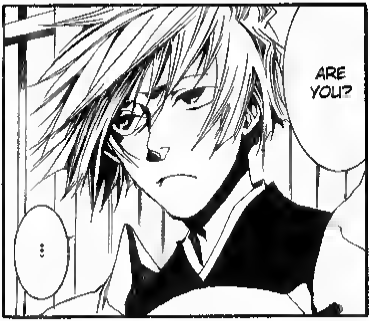
WHY DO YOU WANT TO TAKE SHINSHI OUT OF THE BARRIER?
BUT ...
BREAK MY CURSE?
DID THE TENGU TELL YOU TO DO THAT? HOW CAN YOU BE SURE IT'S NOT A TRAP?
HMM, AND CAN WE REALLY TRUST YOU?
I SWEAR TO PROTECT THAT GIRL FROM ANYONE AND ANYTHING.
THEN I'LL GO TOO.

I THINK I'LL STAY HERE
I'VE GOT OTHER THINGS I HAVE TO DO.
IF THERE ARE NO COMPLAINTS
THEY CAN GO TO-GETHER!

...VERY WELL. BUT I'D RATHER THAT YOU TAKE TSURU-UME ALONG TOO,...
PLEASE TAKE GOOD CARE OF SHINSHU.
PRINCESS!?
YAY!
YOU MAY LEAVE TO-MORROW, AND SHE'LL HELP WITH ANY SUP-PLIES YOU NEED.
NOOOOOO!!
YES, MA'AM !!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!

BUT PLEASE BE CAREFUL...
YES!
NIHON-BASHI, WHERE THE FOX CRIES...?
I Wait up!!
HUHH
HUHH
WHY ARE WE GOING THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!!?
BUT WHY!?
IT'S OVER THERE! BUT AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT THERE WON'T BE ANYONE TO OPEN THE GATE!
WE'RE CLOSE !!
JUST SHUT UP!!
SEE ...?
YEAH
Grab
HUH?

SRS-shump
WAHHH!!
Wah!
Uwah!


ARE YOU?
...

Y—
YOU—
WHAT—

!
COME ON.
!

KYAA!
SFX: -MENACE-

ARE YOU FROM HEAVEN?

WH... WHO ARE YOU!?
silence
SFX: -SWISH-

TN: THIS IS A POEM BY ARIWARA NO NARIHIRA, FROM THE TAE MONOGATARI. IN THE STORY A MAN ELOPES WITH HIS BELOVED AND THEY SHARE A ROMANTIC MOMENT IN THE WET GRASS BEFORE HER BROTHERS STEAL HER AWAY. THE MAN, BELIEVING HER TO HAVE BEEN CARRIED AWAY BY SPIRITS, COMPOSES A POEM IN HIS GRIEF

TING
JUST NOW
I APOLOGISE FOR GREETING YOU IN THAT FORM.
TING
!
ROWL

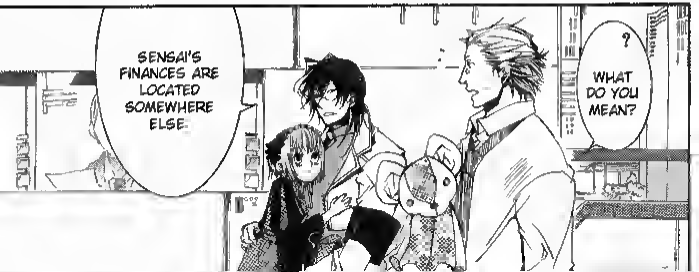
From th
"Ise Mono Gatari"

GOOD AFTER-NOON
Hi, Daddy.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? AREN'T YOU A FREAKY OTAKU WHO NEVER GOES OUT?
I'M SORRY
BUT YOU SHOULD THANK THE PERSON WHO REARRANGED YOUR SCHEDULE TO GIVE YOU THE AFTERNOON OFF!
Are you trying to pull some-thing?
Sigh
IS THIS FOR BUSINESS?
I'VE WORKED OUT THE PROFILE OF THE PERSON WE NEED.

I'LL FILL YOU IN ON THE DETAILS, BUT FIRST, LET'S GO HOME
Yeah
What is she doing here...?
OKAY

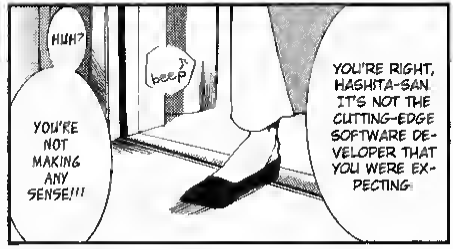
Papa, you should ask for your money back!
GAH!
EH!?
IT SEEMS THAT HIS HACKING WAS DISCOVERED, SO HE HAD TO CLOSE UP SHOP.
OH, HE'S HOLED UP AT HOME NOW.
HOW'S THE JUNK DEALER?

HE CLEARED OUT FAST, SO HE SHOULD BE FINE.
BUT THIS JUST PROVES WHAT DANGEROUS PEOPLE WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE
SENSAI CORPORATION, THAT IS
How about me, am I sad?
Taking half a day off work it wouldn't be so sad to just quit.
THE ATTACK DIDN'T COME FROM THE PARENT CORPORATION.
I DIDN'T THINK IT LOCKED THAT BAD


SENSAI'S FINANCES ARE LOCATED SOMEWHERE ELSE.
?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

A HOSPITAL.

BECAUSE THEY WERE ROUTING THEIR INVESTMENTS THROUGH ASSOCIATED COMPANIES, THEY WERE VERY HARD TO TRACE.
BUT NOW WE KNOW WHERE SENS .I'S MONEY IS COMING FROM.
...WHERE?


HUH?
beep
YOU'RE RIGHT, HASHITA-SAN. IT'S NOT THE CUTTING-EDGE SOFTWARE DEVELOPER THAT YOU WERE EXPECTING.
YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!!!

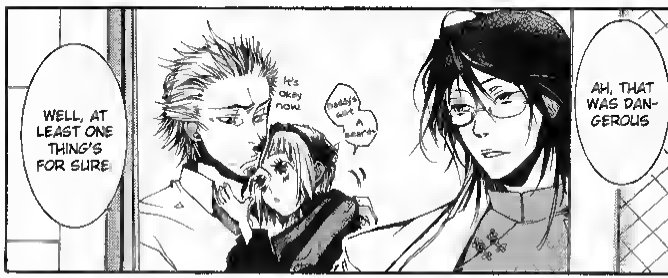
BUT THEN WHO'S REALLY RUNNING THE COMPANY?
AT LEAST WE KNOW

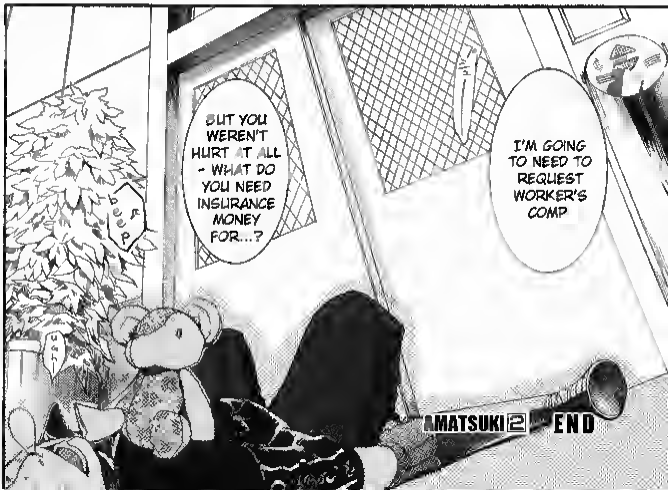
YOU LOST ME THERE
WHY WOULD THEY BE OWNED BY -
A HOSPITAL...?

SFX: CLICK
IT'S SOMEBODY OTHER THAN SENSAI

Grab
!
Hey, you perv ♡
HOW'S THIS?

AH!
PLEASE DON'T MOVE IF I HIT THE SWITCH, IT WOULD BE RATHER PAINFUL FOR YOU
LAAALA
LAAALA
ZAP
JEEZ




I'M GOING TO NEED TO REQUEST WORKER'S COMP
BUT YOU WEREN'T HURT AT ALL - WHAT DO YOU NEED INSURANCE MONEY FOR...?
BEEP
AMATSUKI 2 END

SERIALISED IN MONTHLY COMIC ZERO-SUM FROM APRIL 2005 TO SEPTEMBER 2005

speechless

AMATSUKI
TAKAYAMA SHINOBU
ISBN 4-7580 5187 9

THANKS FOR READING!!
WE'VE MADE IT TO VOLUME 2!
But I made it to Volume 2... thanks to you, Amatsuki will continue in serialisation.
I'm not used to the manga business yet, so I'm still kind of floundering ...
I work hard every day...
Back during Volume 1, I was such a slacker.
AMATSUKI SWEET TALK
Autumn Version
squish
I was worried that I pack in too many people and too much text, so I'm so happy that people like it!
This panel is over the top!! Cop party
IF IT'S ANOTHER JOKE QUESTION LIKE THAT FUNDOSHI ONE FROM THE FIRST VOLUME I'M GONNA THROW IT OUT.....
UM...
HUH? ARE WE GONNA DO ANOTHER QUESTION-AND-ANSWER

THEY'RE ALL LIKE THAT!!...
You're not gonna see it this volume either, so grow up fangirls!!
!!?
I'll put all my energy into drawing until it's done!
She's
don't tease him!
OH YEAH, AND HOW COME WE ONLY GET TWO PAGES THIS TIME? DID SHE RUN OUT OF SPACE?
Maybe they'll give us an extra booklet?
For charting and color cer tifiches!
Hi there!
REFERENCES
N HON NO KOSHA GOMIWA JINJA ("OLD SHRINES OF JAPAN GOMIWA SHRINE") PUBLISHED BY TANKOUSHA
UK YOE N MIRU EDO NO CHINICHI ("EVERYDAY LIFE N EDO THROUGH WOODBLOCK PRINTS") PUBLISHED BY KAWADEHOBOSHINSHA
ME DE TAB KOKORO DE MEDERU HINOH NO IRO ("TRAVEL WITH YOUR EYES AND FALL N LOVE WITH THE COLORS OF JAPAN"), PUBLISHED BY GAKKEN
ZUSETSU EDO 1-5 ("ILLUSTRATED EDO [illegible] PUBLISHED BY GAKKEN.
M KUMIRU PUROGURAMINGU GA WAKARU HON ("QUICK AND EASY PROGRAMMING GUIDE") PUBLISHED BY SHUUWA SYSTEM
OGIEHO HAPPYAKUYA CHOU ("THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND EIGHT NEIGHBORHOODS OF GREATER EDO") BY ISHIKAWA ISSUKE, PUBLISHED BY JITSUGYOU NO N HONSHA
Make sure to look under the cover too...
So I'll see you again in Volume 3!
YOU GUYS OKAY?

AMATSUKI

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That's right!
I can't contain my happiness!
Maybe we'll go into a second printing, or do more extra goodies!!
Thank you so much!
Main Character
We've got an extra booklet - we're already doing pretty well,
And Volume 1 came out a while ago
He's so annoying
Why is he acting so desperate..?

Hey! That's not the reaction I was expecting!!
OH... LOOK WHO JUST SHOWED UP
Oh, no one told me that.
Sorry
Is it a historical fantasy?
Uhh.. what does that have to do with the manga?
So I'll tell you all about Amatsuki
Well, I have to give the readers what they want
Oh, you want to know more about me? Well then you'll just have to keep reading!
The Main Character
But no one told me what to say!!
Sorry
A sci-fi romance?
Okay.. so tell then about the story, then
You can give a little more information that that!!
What's the big deal!?
YOU'RE STUPID!!
I didn't want to give any spoilers for the first volume!!!
ARE YOU TRYING TO ACT STUPID!?
Then why are you here!?

Hey, I bet it's because somebody hasn't even read the first volume yet...
Yeah... Maybe that's why he was so excited about the first volume?
HA HA HA
Surprise!
SFX: ドーン
WAIT!!
I didn't come here for nothing! I'm going to do this right...!!
Well!
That was a new side of Toki you just saw!
So please enjoy the second volume of Amatsuki~!
Pain
Don't tease him!
Ouww...
Pat pat
Pat pat

GLARE
GLOOM
DIRT FARMER
Uhhh
Look!
He's just a plain little dirt farmer!! And what the hell is he wearing!?
Huh?
dirt Farmer
beautiful flower
I'm serious! Now obviously I'm more popular and better for publicity so I should talk about me!!
point
Manga is serious business.
HOW?
Now we made her angry
Because your jokes are pathetic
AMATSUKI 【1】 TAKAYAMA SHINOBU
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